SRINAGAR AND ITS ENVIRONS

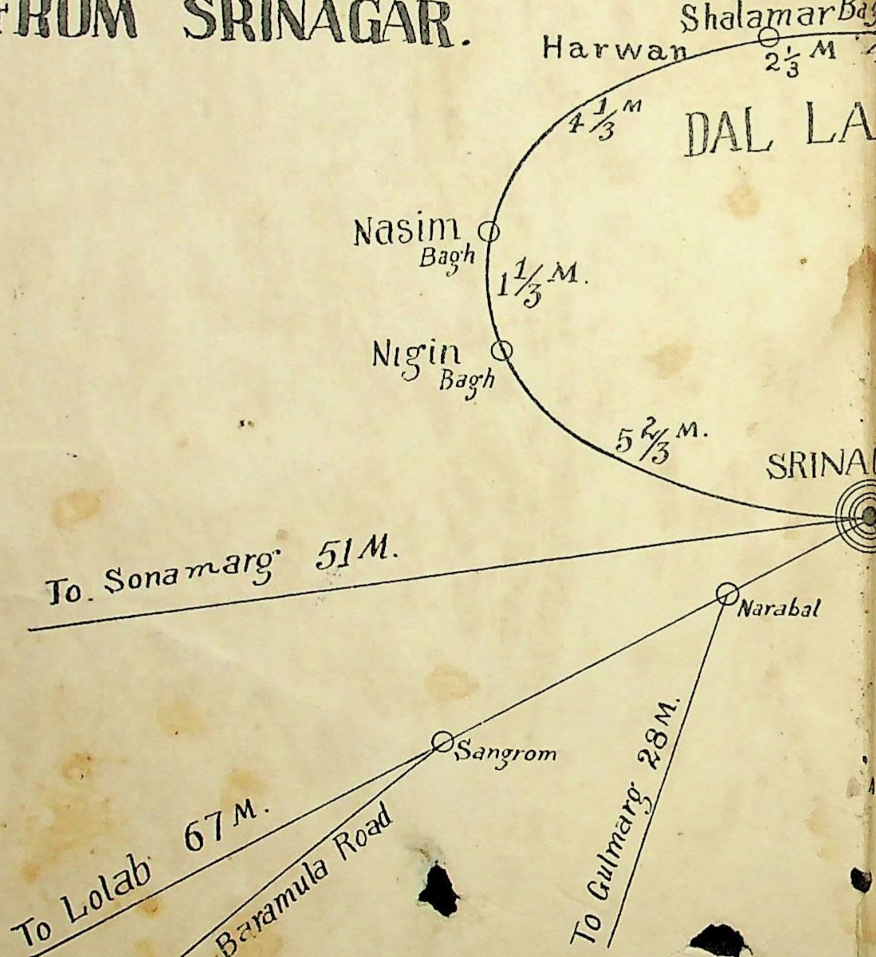
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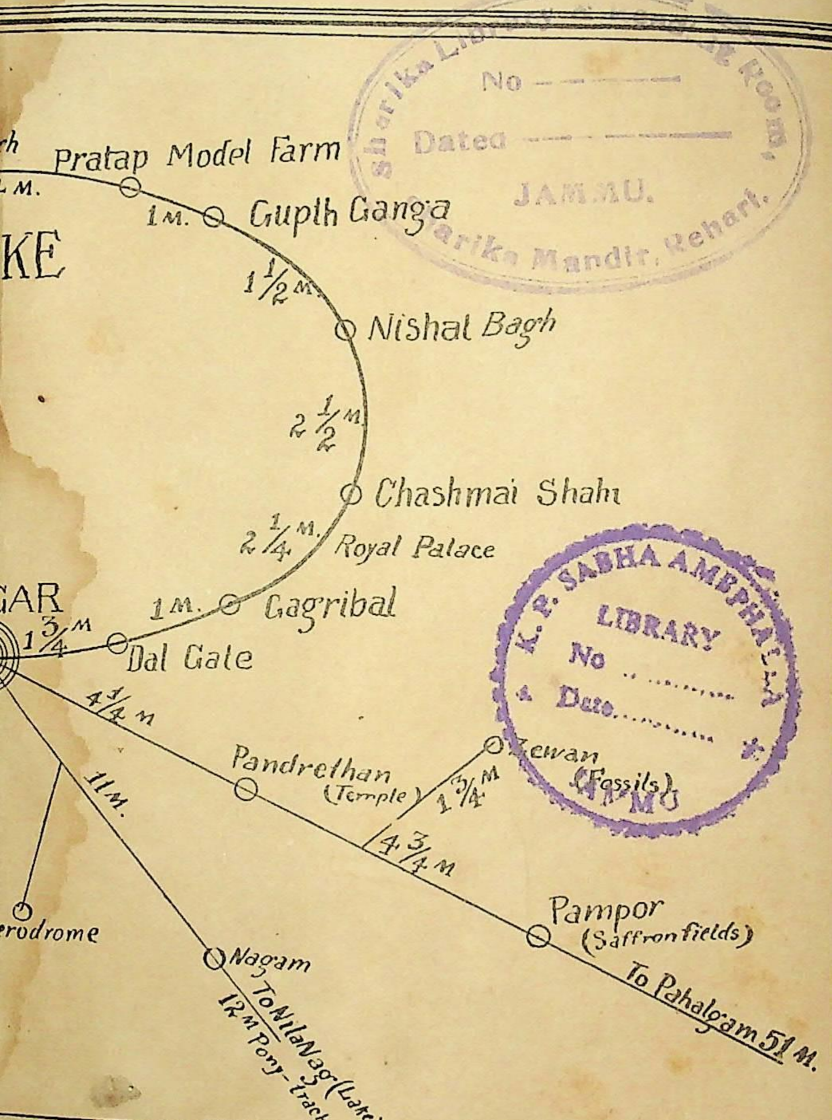
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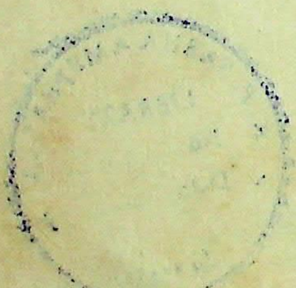


VERNAG

DIAGRAM SHOWING DISTANCES FROM SRINAGAR.




Pratap Model Farm
1 M.
Gupth Ganga
KE
1 1/2 M.
Nishal Bagh
2 1/2 M.
Chashmai Shahi
2 1/4 M.
Royal Palace
1 M.
Gagribal
GAR
1 3/4 M
Dal Gate
4 1/4 M
Pandrethan
(Temple)
Zewan
(Fossils)
1 3/4 M
4 3/4 M
11 M.
Pampor
(Saffron fields)
To Pahalgam 51 M.
erodrome
Nagam
To Nila Nag (Lake)
12 M Pony-track



CONTENTS

FOREWORD

I have much pleasure in writing a foreword to Mr. Samsar Chand's book *Srinagar and its Environs.* Because he is a true lover of Nature. He not only desires to enjoy beauty himself but has always striven to help others to enjoy them. It has ever been his desire to lead his School boys to rejoice in the beauties around them.

To notice bird life around them in the City, to be quick to notice birds when in trouble, and hence he made a small aviary to which the boys would bring sick or wounded birds, where they could regain their health, and power to fly again.

He encouraged his boys to collect flowers, and would take them out to the lakes and mountains, to seek their hidden treasures.

And not only the beauties of the lakes and mountains, but also to raise their eyes to the heavens at night to learn something of the constellations. For which purpose he made a great Map of the heavens which he fixed to the ceiling of the top Classroom in the Central School, so that from this sky map they might learn the beauties and wonders of the night.

His great desire is to open eyes to see, and minds to appreciate the wonders of creation, and to pass on this knowledge to others to help them to live the life of thankfulness and praise to Him Who Giveth All.

O, measureless might
  Ineffable love
While Angels delight,
  To hymn Thee above
Thy ransomed creation
  Though feeble their lays
With true Adoration,
  Shall sing to Thy praise.

Hymn 167 A & M

Srinagar, Kashmir,
October 1st. 1946.

C. E. TYNDALE-BISCOE

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing out this book the author wishes to express his gratitude to the following gentlemen:

To his Teacher and Master the REV. CANON C. E. TYNDALE-BISCOE, *Principal*, C.M.S. Schools, Kashmir, for allowing the use of some pictures from school reports.

To MESSRS MAHATTA & CO. LTD. Srinagar, for the photos of Nigin, The Jhelum and Shálamár.

To MR. MOHAN LALL RAINA, the artist for drawing a diagram and a map of Srinagar.

To MR. LOKESH KOUL, for typing the manuscript.

To LT.-COL. B. T. PHILLIPS and MR. SRIDHER KOUL, for various suggestions regarding the improvement of the book.

CHAPTER I

SRINAGAR AND ITS ENVIRONS

Introduction

The Vale of Kashmir forms an ellipse within the inner mountains of the Himálayan Range, a jewel set in the heart of a rock. These mountains with snow-capped summits and pine-mantled slopes embosom glades and meadows—ideal sites for camping. The high mountain lakes, with turquoise blue waters fed by shimmering glaciers, hold up their mirrors to the azure sky within retreats of reposeful tranquillity, soothing to the fatigued body and mind, and elevating to the soul. The twitter of birds in a region where the deciduous belt meets the conifers or round the glades is a rare delight. The fragrance from the opal-tinted flora on the torrent banks, or from the flowers peeping through the forest undergrowth, or be-gemming the meadows, is most exhilarating.

The valley runs from north-west to south-east and is about 84 miles long by 25 miles broad. On the east the mountain ranges rear their heads in Gwashibrari (17,779 ft.) and Nun Khun (24,400 ft.). On the north behind the ninth mountain range stands the colossal peak of Nanga Parbat (26,643 ft.) like a crystal cone against the azure-blue sky. On the west and south the Pantsál Range, with peaks rising to over 15,000 ft., separates the valleys from the Panjáb. A large number of passes — gateways in the mountain walls — lie in these ranges. Of all the passes the Zoji La, though comparatively low, is extremely dangerous during winter months, when it is a mass of impregnable battlements of snow, and in March when it is the playground of avalanches.

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The valley was once the bed of a lake called Sati Sar. The

alluvial plateaus (uḍars) are the accumulations of sediment in the lake. It was drained, so goes the mythological account, by Kashyp Reshi whom the gods assisted in killing the demon who haunted it. Only the lower mountain slopes were inhabited then. This alluviál plain is traversed by the Vetastá (Jhelum) which receives affluents right and left, issuing from the high lakes and glaciers.

Shri Nagar or, as it is commonly called, Srinagar, is the chief town of the country. 'Shri' means beauty or wealth of knowledge and 'nagar' a city. In ancient times this city was one of the chief seats of learning in Asia. There the students from other countries came to study Sanskrit. There is still a custom in vogue in the plains of Hindustán which requires a boy who is to be invested with the sacred thread, to walk seven steps towards Kashmir. The underlying idea is that the boy is sent to Kashmir to receive his education and returns after completing it. No person in India was in those days recognised as a scholar unless he had a certificate to that effect from the Kashmir University. Kashmir is still called Shardá Piṭ—the seat of learning.

The present site of the town was selected by the pious King Pravarasen II (A.D. 112-172). The old town existed where the present Bádámi Bágh cantonment stands. The busiest part of the town was the right bank which was also the market place. A bridge of boats connected it with the left bank. The good king is reputed to have flown away to Kailás (in Tibeth) through a crack in the ceiling of a temple which had been located near the south-western corner of Hári Parbat where a Mohammedan ziarat stands now. He worshipped in the temple and his subjects saw him in the heavens shining like a star and vanishing like a meteor.

Srinagar is gracefully situated on both the banks of the Vetastá which is spanned here by seven bridges. The city is equi-distant from Baramulla and Anant Nág (Islámábád)

about 34 miles from each. It is more or less in the centre of the valley. Its eastern suburbs extend to the shore of the Dal Lake. It is expanding rapidly in all directions. It is almost equi-distant from Jammu, Rawalpindi, Leh and Gilgit, and is situated at the head of the passes leading into the Indian plains and Central Asia. Hence commercially and strategically it is very important.

Srinagar is encompassed with a large number of gardens which yield various kinds of fruit—almonds, cherries, apricots, plums, pears, apples, grapes and strawberries. They also produce vegetables like peas and beans. Cucumbers, melons and musk-melons are the produce of floating gardens. The Lar area, even now of repute for its grapes, could be turned into the Grape Garden of Kashmir and thus bring considerable wealth to the country. The number of vegetable gardens, too, is considerable, the chief vegetable being knoll kholl (hák).

Spring in Srinagar

About the time when the earth tilts to her position of vernal equinox, vernal breezes begin to vibrate and these are first felt by the kite and the sparrow. We hear mating screams of the former and observe the nuptial dance of the latter. The same vibration, I suppose, rouses an impulse in birds living in other climes which urges them to migrate to rear their young. The first to arrive about the last week of February is the starling, followed by the swallow and the hoopoe.

The oblique rays of the sun begin to assume the vertical position, the earth slowly absorbing the sun's heat gives birth to the pussy-willow, Gagea Kashmiriana, Sternbergia, daffodil and hyacinth, while mountain slopes are graced by the Viburnum, Colchicum luteum and Crown imperialis.

On the morning of their New Year's Day, which falls on the first day of the new moon when she and the sun are

both in the Pisces (min), the first thing which the Kashmiri pandit must see is a dish full of unhusked rice covered with new Viburnum flowers, new orris roots, curds, a bun, an ink-pot and a pen, the new calendar, cooked rice, walnuts and a silver coin. Every member of the family takes a walnut and after bathing offers it to the river.

Late in March the almond gardens round the city are in full bloom. An ascent to the Hári Parbat Hill reveals an enchanting panorama to the spectator. The mountain ring round the valley, crested with silvery snow, gleams in the solar rays under the azure-blue sky. The light[1] and deep[2] pink almond flowers stretch for miles, interspersed with golden rape-seed fields. The placidness of the Dal Lake with turfed beach fringed with willow, bearing lemon-yellow catkins redolent with fragrance, presents an entrancing sight. The gardens round the fort are thronged with merry holiday-makers released from the grip of winter—musical parties swaying in ecstasy to the tune of the guitar, picnic groups with their steaming samávárs, philosophical gatherings discussing the subtleties of the Supreme Soul, all squatting or lounging on velvety turf sprinkled over with white petals. The poor with affected contentment satisfy themselves by eating roasted water-chestnuts (Trapa bispinosa) mixed with pounded chillis, ginger and salt. The vernal breeze is believed to be at its best when a chinár leaf is of the size of a duck's foot. This is called Yusuf Shahi Háwá (probably after Yusuf Shah Tsak the epicurean king of Kashmir).

Summer

As the earth moves on to the position of summer solstice the vertical rays of the sun diffuse heat over the plain and we have sultry days. The heat occasionally becomes almost

[1] Light pink = sweet almonds. [2] Deep pink = bitter almonds.

intolerable, but it is generally followed by showers of rain. Probably the reason is that the heat creates convectional currents in the valley, which rise high and create a vacuum. The winds from the surrounding mountains, saturated with moisture, descend into the valleys and when they rise again they expand, their temperature decreases and they fall as rain.

The trees are clothed with dense foliage, especially the chinár (boiñ) which gives a cool, refreshing and animating shade. People hire doongás, especially on Sundays, and spend the day going round the willow-fringed banks of Telbal, turfed islets, or roaming about the Moghul Gardens where the fountains play and form hundreds of rainbows; where flower beds of diverse colours meet the eye amidst the well-trimmed turf. Scenes like these cannot but enrapture the onlooker who probably leaning against the shady chinár feels transported to an ethereal world. The cooing of doves, warbling of thrushes, chirping of tits and carolling of orioles heard from numerous trees must aid the overpowering effect of what the wondering eyes behold.

On a festival day or during a fair, hundreds of boats are seen plying on the lake. Some of the passengers give vent to their feelings of joy through song, others play on musical instruments, while others again beat time with rhythmical gesticulations. Early in June the strawberry, cherry, apricot, and the cucumber appear temptingly in fruit shops; while melons, musk-melons, pears, plums and grapes do likewise in July and August. The main valley becomes considerably hot in summer months and visitors find shade and shelter in the side valleys and health resorts situ-ed therein. A drive of a couple of hours would take one cool and refreshing atmosphere. Around willow groves paddy fields the mosquitoes are a pest from late June to gust. They are bigger and their sting is more pain-

ful round the Wular Lake; but fortunately they are not of a malarial nature. The pomegranate is the last tree to bloom. The ruby-red flowers in their setting of emerald-green leaves are a charming sight. The fruit when ripe has a cooling effect on the heart and liver. Some of the wild plants which clothe the waste spots round grave-yards and the fort are: Pegasus harmala (isband), iris (white and mauve).

On a summer afternoon the view from some vantage point in the Chashmai Sháhi area is wondrously refreshing to the eye. The poplars, chinárs and groves of trees in their dark-green liveries, the face of the lake with two islets like glittering eyes smiling in calm repose, fill the heart with a delight too deep for words, while the distant mountains often wearing crowns of silvery clouds, the tin roofs scintillating amidst the green foliage of surrounding trees like constellations, and flowers growing on buildings having birch-bark roofs, present an unforgettable scene. The three hills, Aha Teng on the north, Shankaráchár (Takhet-i-Sulaimán) on the south, and Hári Parbat like a crouched lion in the middle, appear three distinct landmarks of the valley. The mountains round the valley become wrapped in haze and the snow begins to thaw leaving a snow-line at Harmoukh and two miniature glaciers round Romesh Thong (Sunset Peak) and Tatakoti which can be discerned from Srinagar.

It is believed that the rainfall of the thirteen days of the summer solstice is not beneficial to vegetables. This time is called adör. According to Kashmiris the rainy season begins when the sun enters Cancer. In the past, immemorial custom required every young child to bathe in the river, put on a woollen garment on the naked body and eat cakes prepared from rice-flour and shaped like a coconut cut in hal and with Amaranthus (lizsa) and plum cooked together. T most custom probably owed its origin to hygienic considerati

ionds.

Autumn

After the autumnal equinox the leaves of the trees begin to assume various shades of gay colours. Poplars change their leaves to saffron and those of the honeysuckle and peach are a mixture of red, yellow and brown. Willows get greenish-yellow and mulberry takes after his tall brother the poplar. The chinár, the celestial tree, appears in heavenly robes of red emitting as it were flames of fire. The near mountains look brown, but ravines which are filled with witch-hazel are a mine of gold. The Chinár Bágh and Nasim Bágh turn into colonies of white giants with myriads of flaming hands. The reflection of the mountain in the lake in front of the Nasim Bágh turns the water into wine which one drinks aridly through the eyes. The Shálamár and the Nishát flaunt their seasonal flower beds of zinnias and if the footpath along these beds be sprinkled over with red lime under the autumnal tints of chinárs the resulting scene is unique.

Every kind of fruit and vegetable is fully ripe for the table. The delicious sappy Kashmir pears, pomegranates and apples are abundant. Swallows, young and old, assemble on electric wires in preparation for migration to warmer latitudes. The adult birds guide their young across the mountain chains, river valleys and seas to their haunts. The river becomes lovely to look at and pond weeds disappear. It is said that the rays from Canopus which appear about the last week of September at 6.0 a.m. on the southern horizon turn all vegetation yellow. It is never seen higher than Orion's belt from the horizon.

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THE STARS OF AN OCTOBER DAWN IN KASHMIR

One of the mottoes of the C.M.S. school is:

> Two men looked out of prison bars,
> One saw the mud, the other stars.

What a delight it is to cast a look at the firmament for a minute and transport our thoughts from the turmoil, strife and wars of this planet to the calm immensity of the firmament.

I chose the dawn of October 20th because we can see at this time of the year a star named Canopus, brightest star in the Argo Navis constellation.

It is every year observed about the 29th September at 6.0 a.m, on the southern horizon. It never rises higher than the length of Orion's belt above the horizon, and after tracing a curve disappears behind the mountain. It lies exactly south of Sirius. If a line be drawn joining Betelgeuse and Saiph in the Orion constellation and then produced, it will pass not very far from Canopus which forms the south-western vertex of a rhomboid. It is known by the name of Aghasti Reshi and Suhul. It is said that Aghasti Reshi was the first Aryan migrant to the south (Deccan). There is a myth associated with this star. The Vindayas—the northern mountain range of the Deccan—were rising higher and higher. The gods became uneasy lest the mountain should cut across the sun's path in the sky. They held a meeting and decided to beseech Aghasti Reshi to go to the south. Vindhya was the disciple of Aghasti. If he would behave disrespectfully to his *guru* (teacher) he would be cursed. They went in a body to Aghasti and apprised him of their distress. Thereupon Aghasti consented and went to the south. When Vindhya Parbat saw his *guru*, he prostrated himself fell at his feet. The *guru* put his right hand on his h and bade him stay in that posture till he returned. Bu settled for ever in the south, and the gods rejoiced.

The peasants attribute the drooping of the yellow ea

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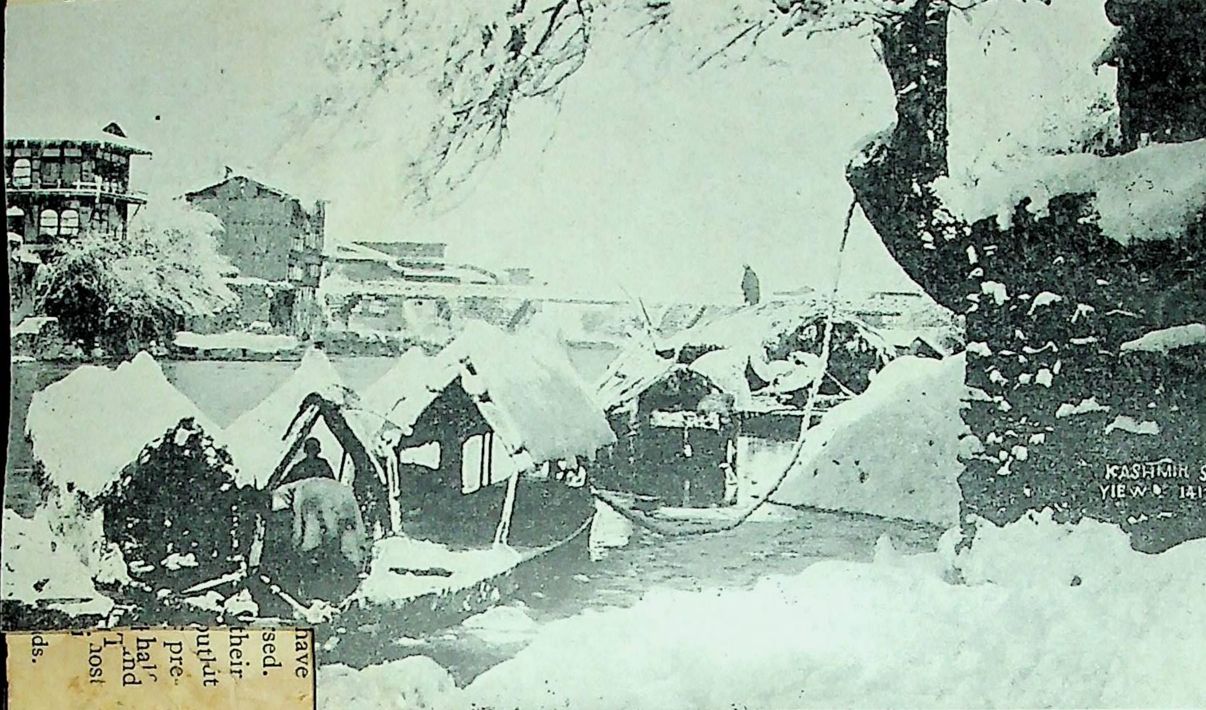
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SRINAGAR IN THE GRIP OF WINTER

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the rice plant and the falling of the autumnal leaves to the rise of Canopus. In October in the eastern horizon rises Leo in the shape of a scythe and triangle. Near the handle of the scythe shines Regulus and at the apex of the triangle which points southward is Denebola.

At the north-eastern corner in the same month is the Great Bear with the tail touching the horizon. The trapezium of the Little Bear is behind the Lar mountain. On the western horizon Fomalhaut and Pegasus set. About the 15th of this month at 6.0 a.m. Fomalhaut is on the western horizon and Canopus on the southern.

Some of the constellation towards the interior of the sky are Orion whose belt points north towards Aldeberan and south towards Sirius, Canis major, Canis minor, Aries, Triangulum and Cassiopeia.

About the middle of October the plateaus of Pampor turn into wonderful garden by the purple bloom of saffron (Crocus sativus) called *Kong* in Kashmiri. The bulb of this plant is believed to be the gift of a serpent-god (Takshak) who was cured of his eye disease by a physician. The stigma of this flower is used in worship and as a spice. It is also used in medicinal preparations. The expanse of this blossom at sunrise and at sunset is most delicious to see.

Winter

The earth now rotating on its axis and revolving round the sun on its orbit occupies the position of Winter Solstice when the Northern Hemisphere is turned away from the ...n which brings in the cold weather in this region. Trees ...ne devoid of leaves, mountains look brown, and the ...ál Range receives the first instalment of snow. The ...r migrants leave their summer haunts and appear ... The jungle crow, the Simla streaked laughing-thrush ...he wall-creeper and many more of their kind are

found around the valley. Almost all swamps and marshes round the valley are full of waterfowl which come down from northern regions where they have their breeding grounds. Some of these waterfowl are the black-winged stilt, the jack snipe, the cormorant, the white-eyed pochard, the peewit, the wood sandpiper, the red shank, the grey lag-goose, the brahmany duck, the mallard, the gadwall, the widgeon, the garganey, the teal, the pintail, the shoveller, the gooseander and the grebe.

We hear the flutter of their wings and their cries at dusk and dawn as they return to their diurnal haunts. The Anchar, the Wular and the Pampor swamps are worth a visit by a sportsman, provided he has a licence, and the reserved areas like Hakor Sar or Háyigám can be visited with the permission of the Controller of the State Rakhs.

The winter conditions in Kashmir are subject to variation. I remember a year when there was no snowfall, and we had sunny days throughout.

Generally the first snow falls during Christmastide. The first fall is an occasion of great merriment. One who receives unawares a sample of the first snow, given or sent to him by a friend or relation, is bound by custom to give a sumptuous feast. Fathers send delicious dishes to their newly-married daughters. It is said that the winters are not so severe now as they used to be. Sometimes it snows off and on for short intervals and the snow which thus gathers on the ground takes no time to thaw. Sometimes it may snow to a depth of two feet and the frost-bound snow may stand for months. According to a local tradition people lived in Kash- mir in summer only, but vacated the valley at the adve pre- winter. An old man unable to walk decided to stay dha ...nd the winter months. As the snow fell the place was vi ...nost by all sorts of nymphs, serphinis, cherubs and other cel spirits. The old man besought them to let him know h...s.

countrymen would be able to live here in winter. He was taken to Nila Nág their king, who gave him the Nilamath Purán and instructed him to observe all the rites and ceremonies mentioned in that book. When the spring came and the people returned they were surprised to find the man alive. He related to them the whole story. They acted upon his advice and settled in the valley regularly. Most of the food preparations used in these ceremonies—some of which are still observed[1]—are appropriate to the cold weather.

Generally on or after Christmas we see lowering skies and mountains shrouded in clouds. A snowfall is generally preceded by a disturbance in the atmosphere and the Kashmiris, say 'sheen chhu tárán' (snow is being brought over). Next morning we see everything draped in white. The snow dust resting on the twigs and branches of trees presents a sight which baffles description. Equally indescribable is the scene when, during the day snow flakes fairly big fall from the dark-grey vault above, silence reigns supreme, occasionally broken by the laughing-thrush calling for snow in its note 'sheen-a-pe-pe' (oh snow! fall, fall). Sometimes a branch of a tree may give way under the heavy fall, and create a dramatic scene. When it has snowed a good deal and the sun comes out, it is worth while to go for a walk to a hillock. The whole country appears draped in silver. The mountain ranges around with black and white patches look like a piebald dinosaur with the serrated mane of fir trees glimmering in sunlight. The flocks of red-billed choughs, softly cawing, the griffon vultures with extended

crusł*hetsi Máwas*. Every family has its own way of preparing food ulses; if enumerated it would cover a volume.

1 A*ḍa Bata*. A preparation of fish and rice, offered to the guardian nodulof the house.

2 Sł*ushur*. A preparation of meat and bread in honour of a newly-locatichild and a newly-married daughter-in-law.

wings and the black eagles soaring with their brethren the kites, make up an entrancing scene. The Kashmiris allot seventy days to winter, beginning from December 22nd. The first forty days, are called the *chilakalán*, the next twenty days the *chila khorad*, and the last ten days the *chila bachi.*

During this period the sun is absent for days together; the cold wind causes the moisture in the vapour-water to freeze and the cold is intense. This weather is called *Kaṭh Kosh.* Every drop of water freezes and icicles looking like aquamarine rods embellish the eaves of the roofs. On occasions the water-vapour in the breath freezes on the moustache.

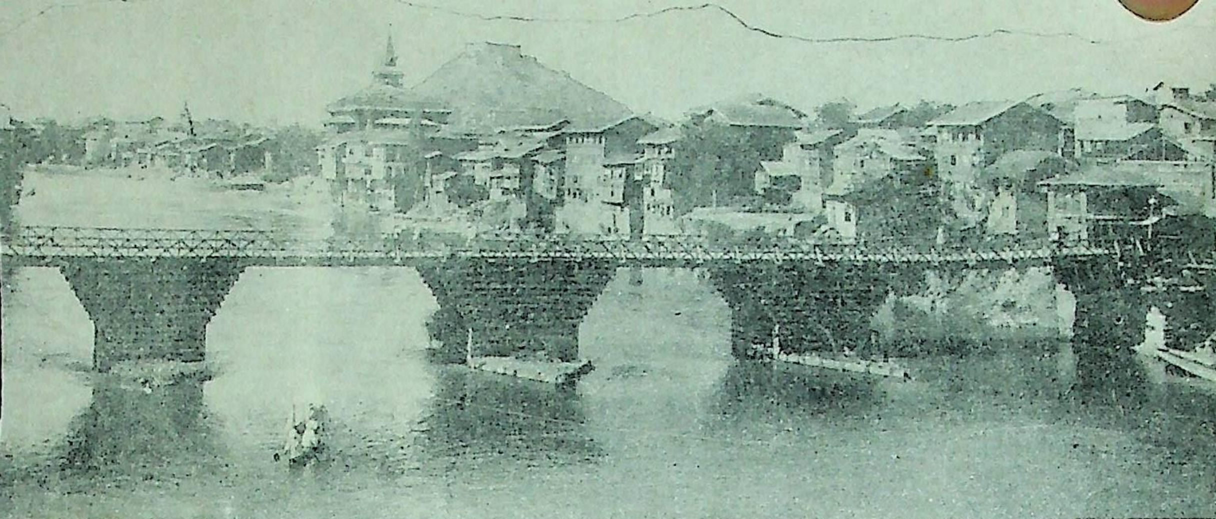
It is said that during Col. Mian Singh's time, about 1833, the Vetasta froze so hard that the boatmen pounded rice on its frozen surface. The Dal Lake has frozen during more than one winter and I know of a time when the Rev. F. E. Lucey took a party of Mission schoolboys to Gagribal for skating. During Christmastide a ski-ing party comes regularly to ski at Khellan Marg at the foot of Apharwaṭ, four miles above Gulmarg, under the auspices of the Ski Club of India. They have here a cosy hut built for the purpose. They visit the place in March, a second time.

Sparrows, tits, jackdaws, house crows, jungle crows, mynas, bulbuls swarm into the houses for food. The little green parakeets which have now taken up their winter quarters in the valleys are seen feeding on the berries of Melia azederick (Persian lilac).

The people heave a sigh of relief when the day called *Bomsin Kàh* arrives. This day falls somewhere in the last week of February. It is said that on this day a cinder falls from the heavens, the idea being that a marked rise in temperature begins to be felt from this day. Winter is over and outings to the haunts of pleasure become the c[illegible] of the day.

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THE SHAH I-HAMDAN MOSQUE AND THE FORT (Hari Parbat) FROM THE 3RD BRIDGE

CHAPTER II

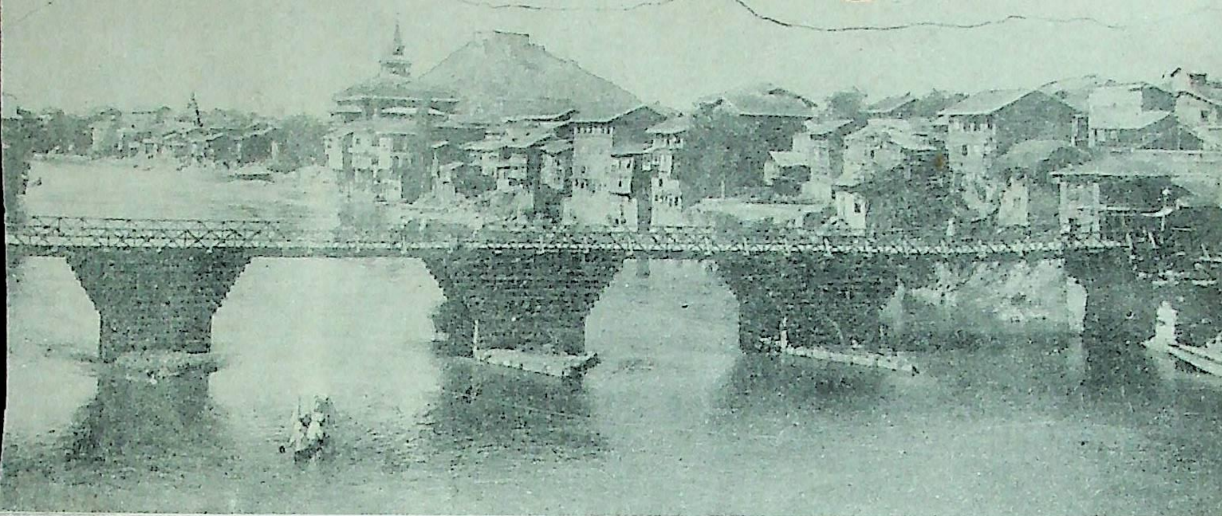
THE HÁRI PARBAT AND THE SHANKARÁCHÁR HILLS

The Hári Parbat Hill occupies more or less a central position in the valley, exactly as the Mandalay Hill does in the Irrawaddy Valley. It consists of a type of basaltic rock[1] favourable to the growth of almond trees. The whole of the hill—every stone and every dust particle of it—is sacred to the Hindus. On the northern side is situated the shrine of Maqdom Sáhib and the mosque and monastery of Akhun Malla Sháh the preceptor of Dárá Shikeh, the eldest son of Sháhi-Jáhán the great Moghul ruler.

There is a myth associated with this hill. Two demons, Tsanḍ and Monḍ, occupied the fair valley. Tsanḍ concealed himself in water near the present location of Hári Parbat and Monḍ somewhere above the present Dal Gate. They were a menace to the people of the valley which could not be inhabited owing to their dreaded presence. The gods spent a number of years in meditation and penance invoking the blessing of the Goddess Párvati who assumed the form of a Hör (myna) and flew to Sumer from where she got a pebble in her beak and threw it on the demon Tsanḍ to crush him. The pebble grew into a mountain. But as he shook the mountain, she, with her lion and all the gods sat on him and crushed him to death. She is worshipped as Shárika[2] in

[1] Amygdaloid = block of igneous origin containing almond-shaped nodules of other minerals such as quartz and felspar.

[2] Shárika = Myna. Rocks besmeared with red lead indicate the location of various gods and goddesses.



THE SHAH I-HAMDAN MOSQUE AND THE FORT (Hari Parbat) FROM THE 3RD BRIDGE

CHAPTER II

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Shri Tsakrá (an emblem of cosmic energy pervading the universe) occupying the middle part of the western slope of the hill facing the city of Prawarsen (Srinagar). The hill is also called Predemna Peeṭ or Kohi Márán.

Asháḍa Naumi, which falls somewhere in June or July, is a great festival associated with the shrine which is invariably visited by devout Hindus on this day. The outer wall was built by Akbar the Great in A.D. 1590 at a cost of one crore and ten lakhs of rupees. This sum was sent from the Royal Treasury, and along with it also came Indian artisans skilled in masonry work. The inscription in Persian at the Kaṭhi Darwázá commemorating this work can be read even today. He intended to lay the foundation of a new capital inside the fort and call it Nágar Nagör. The ruins of certain terraces can still be seen on the Pokħiri Bal side.

The fort at the top of the hill was built by Azim Khan, the Pathan governor. It is now an arsenal and permission to visit it has to be obtained from the Director, Visitors Bureau. The view of the Dal lake and a part of the valley from the fort is most charming.

SHANKARÁCHÁR OR TAKHET-I-SULAIMÁN

Shankaráchár is a detached ridge of igneous rock to the south-east of Srinagar, separated from the Shálamár Range by the Aita Gaj Gap. The summit of the hill is crowned with a picturesque edifice built originally by Raja Sandimán[1] several centuries before the Christian era.

Shankaráchár was also called Gopádittya after the founder of Gopkár. The present name owes its origin to the great philosopher Shankarácharya who visited the valley about ten centuries ago, and lodged at the top of this hill, where it appears there were small sheds of Brahmans who looked

[1] Sulaimán is the corrupt form of Sandimán.

after the temple. There is a small tank built of slabs of stone just behind the temple. In those days the Archarya or the Chief Preceptor or, in modern parlance, the Chancellor of the University of Srinagar was Swami Abinaugupth. A discussion took place between the two sages and according to the local tradition Abinaugupth initiated Shankarácharya into the Shakti cult.

A climb to the hill from the Mission Hospital will take about 40 min. The path is a pony-track. The descent towards the Gagribal spur is gentle. En route is the tomb of Mian Dullo who is said to have squandered away all the money which his father had given him to trade with. He was enamoured of the charms of the Dal Lake which he selected as his favourite haunt for the gratification of his epicurean appetites.

The panoramic view of the valley in early April when the snow is deep on the mountains, or after rains on a summer day from the summit of the hill is one of the best that could ever be witnessed. The mountain ranges on the south, west and north rise one above the other and the peaks, varying in height from 13,000–15,500 ft. jut out like the teeth of a saw cutting through the sky. On the south lies the Banahál Pass (9,250 ft.) the chief highway to Jummu, and a number of other passes and depressions. The Brahma Shakri peaks, a group of grand cones viewed even from Lahore, the Aliabad Pass (11,440 ft.) leading to Gujrat, the Romesh Thong (Sunset) Peak, Tata Koti[1] (15,540 ft.) guard the Chhoti Gali Pass (14,450 ft.), the highest in the range come one after another. We now turn our eyes to the west where lies the vast plateau of Tosa Maidán, the paradise of sheep, and where the eye meets the depression of Ferozpor leading into Punch (prunts) and Apharwaṭ (13,542 ft.) giving

[1] Highest peak in the Pantrál Range.

shelter to Gulmarg and affording thrilling sport for the votaries of ski-ing in India.

Beyond the Baramula Pass, towards the north-west, the range is continued in Kaj Nág and Khágán mountain. In between the Tragbal (9,500 ft.) and Zoji La (10,500 ft.) appears the beautiful candy cone of Harmoukh (16,842 ft.) in the north, while the eastern range culminating in Mahádiv (13,013 ft.) and Western peaks completes the enchanting circle.

At the foot of these mountains lie the alluvial plateaus with rich yellow soil yielding maize and rice where water is available. The swamps, marshes and lakes of the valleys stretch as far as the Wular Lake in the extreme north of the valley. The Baramula road bordered with poplars, the sinuous course of the Vetasta (Jhelum), cutting a clean almond called Shivapor Phur, the green house-tops now disappearing with the introduction of galvanised iron sheets for roofs, the minarets of churches and mosques and the shining surface of the temples present a picturesque sight.

Turning now to the Dal Lake we see the Moghul gardens of Nasim, Shálamár and Nishát densely shaded by the deep green foliage of Boiñ (Chinár) trees, the floating gardens and the houses situated on the islands in the lake encompassed by poplars, willows and quince trees. The two expanses of deep blue water are separated by the causeway like two great eyes, each with its pupil of an island. The eastern shore is embellished by the magnificent Royal Palace with their crystal sheen, by newly-laid gardens and the boulevard skirting it.

The Government has made the hill a resort and it is hoped that it will one day be clothed with dense herbage and trees providing charming bowers for lovers. A number of paths have been marked out and platforms with suitable seats have been made for visitors. In fact, every effort is made to attract people to the hill.

In olden days a great festival used to be held by the Hindus on the 10th day of the lunar fortnight of Baisak which corresponds to March. Just above the Dal Gate they would come in doongás to bathe. This was called Monḍa daham, probably in memory of the killing of the demon Monḍ by the goddess Shárika. But this festival has now been entirely forgotten as if nothing like it ever existed.

CHAPTER III

THE DAL LAKE

The Dal Lake is one of the chief ornaments of the Kashmir valley. It is situated to the east of Srinagar. (The word 'dal' signifies an expanse of water.) It is 4 miles long and $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles broad and covers an area of about 10 square miles. The western portion is dotted with islets called *demb* and numerous waterways running inland. The chief canal is called Már after the high mountain lake Már Sar which drains the Dachigam Rakh after feeding the Harwan Reservoir and empties itself into the lake towards the north. The islets are covered with willow trees which are of both indigenous and foreign varieties. The former having small lanceolate leaves are distinguished from the larger leaves of the latter. The twigs of the former have a bitter taste and are used as tooth brushes. The immersion of the feet in water in which the leaves of this tree have been soaked for some time results in a soothing effect to the head and eyes. If the water is well strained and pure it is used in some cases for anemia. The twigs divested of bark and pounded into a fine powder and mixed with curds form an effective balm for burns. The wood is highly prized, being used for the manufacture of blades for cricket bats.

The English willow has been introduced and thrives on these islets. It provides an excellent material for basket-making which has grown into an important industry.

Where the land has been cleared of trees, all kinds of vegetables are grown—potatoes, tomatoes, pumpkins, gourds, turnips, radishes and many exotic varieties. The chief

manure for these fields is ashes, the silt of shallow canals, and pondweeds, such as Polygonum, water milfoil, Naais major. (The weeds are twisted with a punting pole thrust into water, rooted out and piled in a boat. They are left to rot till they ferment and then are applied to melons, tomatoes, gourds, onions and garlic.) Potentilla reptens, Euphorbia and nettle also grow profusely. Here and there cosy huts stand on these islands. The surroundings of the huts are generally insanitary. The æsthetic sense of appreciating beauty is not yet developed. The planting of creepers and rose bushes round these hamlets would improve their look considerably.

The Dal Lake is divided into three parts by two causeways, one of these starts from Náyid Yár Bridge and is about four miles long. This was constructed by a grocer named Mahesh Chowdhery, who miraculously came into possession of a mass of gold. Under the guidance of a nymph, who appeared to him in the form of a serpent, the course of the dam which terminates at Ishibör village was indicated. Should the other course be taken, it leads to Nasīm Bagh and Nigin. The portion towards the east is called Lokut[1] Dal, while the portion in front of Nasīm is called Boḍ[2] Dal. Lately the eastern causeway has been extended from the Nishát side to enable the Government to take the water pipe line through this dam to the city. It is said that the contractors experienced great difficulty in filling up a spring near the Nishát Bridge.

On the south-western corner is an inlet called Sodura Khon which is the deepest part of the lake. ('Sodur' means a sea, and 'khon' a gulf.) It is more than 40 feet deep and undoubtedly a spring. It is also said that in olden times there existed two springs near Sodurabal to which people

[1] Lokut = small. [2] Boḍ = large.

from the city of Baṭapora used to come for pilgrimage when the city was peopled by the Brahmans. The place was called Sodura after the spring which lies at the foot of Bhutsher.

The shores of the gulf are frequented by visitors in house boats. Huge chinárs, willows and tall poplars fringe the shore. Apricot and cherry, almond and pear, quince and apple trees decorate the gardens. What a delight it is to keep open the window of a house-boat on a May-dawn, and keep one's ears open to the celestial musical vibrations from a chinár tree under which the boat is moored! If a paradise fly-catcher happens to nest here, it is the first feathered friend to break the silence of the dawn. It will be followed by the Tickell's thrush with its incessant melody and next by the golden oriole with its liquid note. Simultaneously the ring-dove will be heard stringing its harp and cooing the crescendo and the dove in repartee filling the morning breeze with melody and concord. As the day advances the other birds join in with their quota till the concert is in full swing. Who that listens to the celestial music would not sing and dance and lose himself in ecstasy! As daylight deepens the chorus begins to subside, but the doves and hoopoes carry on in some shady nook till the Great Orb shows his lustrous face.

Here one comes across bathing boats with catering arrangements. The boats are properly decorated with shoots and arrangements for diving from various heights. The holiday makers swim and dive and make merry in the water. The swimmer stands on a plank which is towed by a motor-launch and holds a rope in his or her hand in an erect position. Very few finish circling round the bathing boat at full speed in an erect posture. This we may call a kind of surf-riding.

There are some fine buildings in the Nigin Bagh which

house hotels and a branch of the Srinagar English Club. So the visitor does not feel the want of the essential amenities of civilised life. There is also a regular bázár on the road, supplying almost all the needs of the visitors. The wheat and barley fields begemmed with scarlet red Papaver naudecaule present an enchanting spectacle in spring, while the Convulvolus arvensis embraces the tall weeds tightly.

Hazrat Bal ('hazrat = majesty; 'bal'=place') has grown into a village owing to its being the sanctified repository of the Prophet Mahmad's hair which was brought to Kashmir from Medina in Arabia by Sayid Abdulla in 1111 A.H. The ziarit is beautifully situated on the lake and a good number of chinárs stand in its compound which is paved with stones. There is a colony of night herons on these chinárs. The carvings on the walls and the latticed windows of the mosque are specimens of exquisite art. This is one of the most sacred spots for the Mussalmáns who visit the place from all parts of the valley. Friday is the chief day in a week for congregations to assemble. There are four fairs held annually when the faithful gather in their thousands. It is a great sight to see hundreds offering their prayers to God facing towards the west. Hundreds of boats are to be seen moored along the beach. Villagers bring here the produce of their fields for sale on these occasions.

Not far from Hazrat Bal is the Garden of Morning Breeze —the Nasim Bagh. The Great Moghal, Akbar, conquered Kashmir in 1588. This garden was laid by him, and about 1,200 chinárs planted in it. So some chinárs are 360 years old. There is now a chinár nursery in the garden planted to provide saplings to replace the dead chinárs. There is also a small rill passing through the middle of the garden. Also there is a spring of good water in the east of the garden not far from the shore. The remains of some old buildings can be seen on the same side.

This garden makes an excellent camping ground. It commands an attractive view. In the foreground is a spacious sheet of water surrounding the silver island—Rupa Lank, which is like a piece of emerald embossed in aquamarine.

The beautiful peak of Mahádiv (13,013 ft.) and the steep slopes of the Shálamár Range are lovely to behold. On the west the Hári Parbat Hill and the Pantsál Range present a more impressive spectacle. The surrounding fields and luscious gardens breathe health and vigour. The cool shade of the chinár resonant with the music of sweet songsters at dawn in May and June transport the visitor to Elysium. In autumn when the chinár turns red and the glowing tints of the setting sun are reflected in the lake, the whole sheet of water is turned into a ruby mine.

One can have quite a number of delightful excursions from this garden.

(*a*) A Cruise in a Shikara to the Tel-Bal Nala

The water of this nala is drawn from the thawed snows of the Mahádiv and also from the surplus water of the Reservoir. This stream abounds in fish which is much liked as food. The banks are lined with willows and blue and pied kingfishers find plenty of food in these waters. While going up the stream one comes across a lovely village and from a vantage point a clear view of the valley can be had. In July and August mosquitoes are a pest here.

(*b*) A Visit to Shalamar Garden

This garden lies to the north-east of the Dal Lake and is a favourite haunt of holiday-makers. The word Shálamár comes from 'shála', a mountain and 'már', beautiful. It is said that the Saint Nur-ud-din, also called Nunda Rishi, when invited to visit that part of the city refused, saying, 'If I visit this place now, I shall not be allowed to visit

Paradise hereafter'. The garden was laid out by Jahangir in 1619. It is beautifully kept and the turf is fairly deep. The seasonal flowers are carefully sown and beds are in perfect order. The fountains playing round the pavilion, shone upon by the sun's rays passing through the chinár leaves, display myriads of rainbow colours. The close proximity of the hills as the background of the garden presents a picturesque contrast to the boldly exposed lay-out of Nishát. After sunset the electric lamps shining in the niches behind the cascades are marvellous.

(*c*) A Visit to Harvan

Harvan is the corrupt form of Shadirhadvana which means 'grove of six saints'. This place is three miles from Shálamár. Here is an artificial lake in which the water from the Már Sar Lake is stored. This is the source of the water supply to the city. The reflection in the lake of the dense forest slopes of nearby mountains and the verdant reserved Dachigám defile is a thrilling sight. Formerly the pilgrims to Mahádiv climbed through Dachigám but now they go from Dwára. The excavations of Harvan just above the road are of great historical and artistic interest and hence worth a visit. They have been carried out under the direction of Pt. R. C. Kák and are probably the first of their kind in the world. They belong to A.D. 300 when Kashmir was included in the Kushan Empire and Buddhism prevailed in the country. The fourth Council was held about this time under Kanishka. This was the monastery where the great scholar Nágarjuna lived. It contained a stupa, some chapels and other buildings. The construction work is of three kinds: (1) Rubble, (2) Diaper-rubble, (3) Tile. A vivid account of these excavations is given in the *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir*, pages 105–111.

Just under the shadow of the excavation is the Trout

Hatchery. Trout-culture was introduced in Kashmir by Mr. Mitchell in 1900. It was through the hard work and steadfast mind of Pt. Sodámá that this fish thrived here. The ova were sent from here to other parts of India such as Kulu, Kangra, Naini Tal and Shillong. Trout fishing is one of the favourite pastimes of visitors to the valley now.

The Dachigám Valley, more commonly known as Döch Gám Rakh or Game Reserve is one of the most charming dales of Kashmir. Its rich variety of flora and fauna, its luxuriant mountain slopes, the wild animals such as the panther, the bear and the deer which haunt its depths, its myriads of songsters make it a rare beauty spot even in Kashmir. A silvery stream emptying the Már Sar drains this emerald green vale. This lovely spot, which by the way kisses the foot of Mahádiv (13,013 ft.) was deservedly the favourite abode of the Gupth Family, the expounders of Shaivism in Kashmir. There is still a spot in the valley which is called Vasupor, undoubtedly the village of Vasuguptha. A little higher up the valley there is a huge rock called Shankar Pal (Shankar's rock). It is said that a Shiva treatise has been transcribed from an inscription on a portion of the rock, which is now embedded in the earth. This seems to have been the spot where Shankar Guptha meditated. To this saint's miraculous power is attributed the existence of Gupth Gangá, the famous spring to the north of Nishát Bágh. Now there is a fish pond under this rock. Nágaberan is a meadow situated behind the valley.

About 400 yards to the N.E. of the reservoir under a huge chinár tree is a small spring called Sháradbal. This is dedicated to Shárda, the goddess of learning. The water of this spring is excellent for indigestion.

Nishát Bágh[1] is an excellent pleasance where an afternoon with lunch and tea can be spent with great pleasure. This

1 Garden of pleasure. It is now like a modern park.

garden was laid out in 1632 by Asaf Khán, the brother of Nur Jahán, the Queen of Jahángir. It is beautifully terraced and the delicious smell of lilac and the flower beds lying on either side of the two path-ways which run through the garden are most exhilarating. The majestic chinárs with their cool shade, the playing of fountains and cooing of doves send a thrill through every fibre. The view of the Dal Lake is superb. This garden lacks the subdued tone, the deep lawns and the bold background of Shálamár.

The eastern shore of the Dal Lake is full of springs. The Hindus attach some sanctity to almost all these springs and hence in olden days a large number of temples were built and gardens laid out round about them by the kings, their queens and their ministers. The most important of these springs is Gupta Gangá, situated in Ishibör village. Ishibör is the corrupt form of Shri Ishán Bror. Shri Ishán was the spiritual tutor of King Sandimati (34 B.C.–A.D. 13), and 'Bror' is probably drived from 'bairau'–a god. It was here that King Sandimati built a temple in honour of his guru, Shri Ishán, and laid out gardens. Later on his example was followed by Baḍ Shah (A.D. 1420-1470) The spring is sacred to the Hindus who come here to bathe on Baisáki or New Year's Day. It is also visited on Shri Krishna's birthday. There is a peak called Sörshwari just above the spring which some of the pilgrims climb to gain merit.

Gopi Tirth is a small spring with clean water just behind the Nishát Bágh. There are two springs just near the road. One of these, called Shri Tsakör, has well-built sides which are covered with maiden-hair ferns. The other, Matsö Bawn, is a miniature representation of the Mártand Spring and here people go to remember their dead.

The Chashma-i-Sháhi or the Royal Spring is a bubbling fount of cold, crystal clear water which the visitor in summer would much like to drink. It is beautifully preserved

and a small garden maintained by the Government is attached to it. The view from here is one of the most charming and is aptly described in the words of R. B. Pt. R. C. Kák (now Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir): 'In spring, when the fields of the blossoming rape-seed flank the verdant hill slopes with gold; when the snow-capped mountains are being ceaselessly washed by melting snows and frequent showers; when in sunny intervals masses of downy clouds are seen floating majestically in the translucent azure of the sky, their shadow trailing after them as if caught by the sharp mountain peaks; when the lake is free from weeds and reeds—beardless, as the Kashmiri call it; and the two small islets, Rupa Lank and Sona Lank, are like emeralds set in the sapphire shield of the Dal; when vast patches of the slopes of the Chashma-i-Sháhi Hill and the Hári Parbat are covered with red and white almond blossom—the fortunate spectator stands entranced as he gazes out of the arch of the *báràdhari* and his feelings are lulled by the gentle murmur of the little fountain that plays in the centre of the hall.'

Just to the left of Chashma-i-Sháhi high up in the Bren Nállah, there is the shrine of Bábá Ghulum Din, the brother of Sheikh Nur-ud-Din. In early spring the whole place is covered with Colchicum lutem, Crown imperialis and Virburnum nervosum. Here too we see a spring but it is not kept clean. In the rills grow water-cress (Nasturtium officinale) *nága babör* which is a valuable article of food.

In the same level with Chashma-i-Sháhi and to the right of it is the delightful pellucid spring called Chashma-i-Sáhibi. In the opinion of some people its water is preferable to that of Chashma-i-Sháhi. It lies amid a grove of chinárs, mulberry and cherry trees. The wild rose bushes, hyacinth and narcissus are in profusion. Formerly it was looked after by a sadhu who lived there. In summer the

pandits of Srinagar spend their week-ends here. It is a pity the spot has been so neglected. With care and attention it will become one of the best health resorts in Kashmir. The view of the lake is most fascinating from here.

Pari Mahal (the Palace of Fairies) or Kuntlun, is a set of ruined terraces on one of the spurs of Zobwon Hill. These were built by the eldest son of Shah-i-Jahan, Dara Shikoh, the philosopher prince. Here he had philosophic discussions—and what a spot for such exercises—with his tutor, Akhun Malla Sháh. It is interesting to examine the structure of the building. It had been founded on the ruins of a Buddhist monastery.

There is another spring in the ravine of Zobwonan. It is dedicated to the Goddess Zishṭa and is sacred to the Hindus. People come here for pilgrimage on every Tuesday in the month of Zeth (May-June). This furnishes a good outing for the women-folk of Srinagar. Near the spring there is a big chinár and round about it are groves of fruit trees, poplars and willows. A man lives here permanently to look after the spring. Some years back, I remember having seen a rock which had Shiv-lingams carved on it on five sides, partially covered with redlead and a rose bush growing from a crevice in the top. It was enclosed in a baked brick wall in an almond garden. It was called Zeshṭa-Pal.

A spring lies to the north of Ziṭhair in the adjoining wood. This wood is an excellent spot for the study of birds. The whole Gupkár slope is now beautifully turfed and the royal palaces command a charming view of the Dal. The white royal mansions amid the green vegetation appear like a crystal vein in an emerald mine. On a summer day the reflection of the electric lamps of the palace in the lake is a marvellous sight.

There is a ziárat to the Shias on the foot of the eastern slope of Shankaráchár under a cluster of stunted pines.

A park has been newly laid out on the eastern slope of the hill. It contains lovely bowers and groves of trees where visitors can enjoy their evening walk. The whole of the Gagribal[1] spur is well covered with rose-bushes and in early May the whole place is dyed with pink and replete with fragrance. White iris blends with pink to give another shade of colour.

A road lined with houses and hotels runs now from the Dal Gate round the lake. It has been built to enable tourists and citizens to have walks along the shore of the Lake and enjoy its superb view.

[1] Derived from gágher = rock; bal = place.

CHAPTER IV

A CRUISE ON THE DAL LAKE

The water of the Dal Lake is discharged through the Dal Gate into the Tsonṭ Kol (apple stream). The old gate, now known as Pron Khan, was near the temple which stands lower down on this stream. An attractive view of Mahádiv and Kotwál peaks presents itself from the gate where shikárás with spring cushions, clean and beautiful seats are ready to convey the visitor round the lake. There are two canals from the Dal Gate leading on to the lake. The broad canal on the right leads straight on to the southern part of the lake, while the left one winds its way to the busy part of the lake where one can study the life and occupation of the people. We shall take this route.

The boat is propelled by three or four paddlers at a good speed between rows of willows and poplars and amid islets and picturesque buildings. The surface of the water is covered with water milfoil[1], water-fern and duck-weed. We reach the stately temple which marks the boundary of Rainawári, a suburb of Srinagar. Half a mile from the ghat is the C.M.S. Newman Hospital for women. The produce of the lake is conveyed to the market in swift small shikárás. At a short distance from the temple there is a beautiful bridge with an artistic arch under which the boat passes. Set in a pier of this bridge is a stone with an inscription giving the name and date of the builder. It is from this bridge that the causeway across the lake starts. Beyond on the left is

[1] Two species, Myriophyllum verticillum which has grown in profusion since 1941, and Myriophyllum spicatum which grows under water.

seen the Fort and a building which contains the Mourning Hall for Shias. A little further on are three erect stone slabs—two on either side of the canal and the third is in a swamp concealed among the willows. Probably, they used to be the water-gauges in former days, but now they are believed to be petrified human bodies. The one on the right with a pointed top is the banker who charged 36 per cent interest and paid annas fifteen and three pies for every silver rupee (annas sixteen). The other on the left with a flat top is the mat-seller, who had a measuring rod six inches less than the right length and sold mats by this rod. The third concealed among the willows with girded loins and several vessels on his shoulders, is the milk man who mixed water with the milk and sold the adulterated stuff as pure milk. The gods were wrath with these men for their evil deeds, and cursed them and turned them into stones, and they stand thus to this day.

The boat speeding through islets teeming with gourds, pumpkins, brinjals and various vegetables, reaches a point where a magnificent chinár stands on an island with a solitary house which commands a grand view. On the opposite side is an island called Baṭa Mazár, rearing Lombardy poplars on its bosom.

Here the waterway splits into three branches. The one on the right goes to Nishát Bágh, the left one spanned by the Ashai Bágh Bridge to Nigin (Jewel) Bágh and the middle one to Shálamár. All floating gardens are concentrated in Dal Kotwál. Punting poles are driven into some of them to keep them steady. These poles afford vantage points for kingfishers and shrikes to pounce upon their prey.

What is a floating garden?

A long strip of land about twenty yards by one yard is cut off from the side of a swamp containing the matted roots

of a bulrush bed, which is cut off from underneath, allowing a thickness of about two ft. and a half, and the whole mass floats up. The floating mass is anchored to a boat and punted to a secure position. In course of time weeds and mud settle down on it and lo! we have a floating garden. Sometimes it happens that a farmer steals away a garden of his neighbour. The Kashmiri name for a floating garden is *rád*. These gardens yield tomatoes, cucumbers, musk and other kinds of melons. The manure used is the rotting pond-weeds in coils.

In late July the blossom of the lotus (Nelumbium speciosum)—*pomposh*—presents a most charming sight. The flower and the cup-like leaf are about a yard above the surface of the water. The fruit is eaten and the roots (nadru) form the chief vegetable used by the townspeople during the winter months. The root-knots pounded and fried in oil are supposed to cure diarrhoea in children. The best lotus blossom can be seen in the southern portion of the Anchár Lake called Khushál Sar.

The bulrushes which grow in the swamps afford a safe shelter to reed-warblers, bitterns, moorhens and dabchicks. The interior of the green stem, called *petsi-laḍur*, and the pollen above the pappus, called *dal masálah*, are eaten. The pappus mixed with fine earth makes an excellent plaster called *kalaron*. In autumn the plant is mown down and used for mats.

A fragrant white lily (Nymphaea stallata) *bomposh*, which has great medicinal qualities, is found among the bulrushes. It is used in various forms of concoction with other herbs. The stamin mixed with sugar is said to be good for the blood. The long stem dried and stewed with dried fish is used as a table delicacy. Its fruit kenabob is eaten. The Nymphaea alba is another variety of this flower.

Some islands are covered with quince trees which are of

two varieties, the sour and the sweet. The sweet variety is highly beneficial for coughs. Jams are prepared from the fruit as well as the flowers. The leaves of this tree used as tea are said to be good for chest troubles. The seeds of both kinds used in decoctions have a lubricating effect on the digestive organs and make excellent cool drinks.

The narrow channels between islands where the water is still are full of a cordate-leafed plant (Limnanthemum nymphoides) called *khor*, which is the chief fodder for cows in summer and increases their supply of milk.

There is another plant Hydrocharis, Morsus-ranae (Bhoṭa khor) which is prolific in still waters. One of the most important aquatic herbs is Trapa bispinosa (water chestnut) which is called singhára or gôr. The fruit is eaten raw after peeling, or is roasted. It is found in large quantities in the Wular Lake where it is dried, husked and turned into flour. It is a nerve tonic and forms a specific diet for diabetes.

From Dal Koṭwál the boat enters Boḍ Dal which looks like a sheet of aquamarine embossed with the emerald slab of Rupa Lank. The two mountain peaks in the north-east, Mahádiv and Koṭwál, stand like sentinels or as guardian saints to the lake. The pavilion of the Nishát Bágh beckons the wayfarer to come and be refreshed. On the left are conspicuous spots, the hamlet of Hazrat Bal with a chinár grove, the home of night herons, and Nasim Bágh.

The Rupa Lank (Silver Island) is an artificial island occupying a central position in the lake. It was made as a haven where boats could be anchored during a sudden storm. There are four chinárs on the four corners and lately a pavilion has been built, which is surrounded by lilac bushes. Some garden flowers such as pansies, wall flowers and salvias have been planted. The pavilion should have been more artistic and preferably of stone. Possibly, a fisherman may be seen with his long spear furnished with seven barbed points

scanning the depth of water for fish. Sometimes when it is dark, he lights a lantern to attract them. The fishes generally found in the Lake are of four kinds—

1. Ail gáḍ.
2. Kashir gáḍ (it has a flat white body).
3. Chiriv.
4. Theṭa Gurun, the last named variety being generally found near the shore of the lake.

The whiskered terns skim along the surface of the water with their keen eyes in search of fish, and a pair of water-pheasants with white wings and a plume feather in the tail may be seen surveying the lake. Sometimes a crake may be heard in the bulrushes at the entrance to the canal leading to the Shálamár Bágh.

Lunch over, the boat moves beyond the eastern shore of the island over a rather weedy surface. On the way one may come across an aquatic plant, Euryale ferox, with orbicular leaves, densely thorny, green above and purple below. Each fruit of about 20 nuts is enclosed in a prickly pouch. The fruit roasted and eaten with, or stewed in, milk is a powerful nerve tonic. It is called *juwar* in Kashmiri. The boat passes under a picturesque bridge called Onṭa Kadal (Camel Bridge) with an artistic arch and just in front of the bridge is a spring in the lake where the water is weedless and dark blue. This part has become a miniature lake enclosed by causeways. It is generally full of pond-weeds, Myriophyllum spicatum, fringed with willows and bulrushes. On Sundays boats throng the landing place of Nishát Bágh. After having tea on the velvety turf beds, amid flowers of diverse hues with Nature's transcendent glories meeting the eye on every side, one is transported to ethereal realms lost in an ecstasy of indescribable bliss. When the sun sets and sends the reflections of his red light on the fleecy clouds sailing in the sky, the boat leaves the ghaṭ and

under the wooden bridge, Nali Kadal (Pipe Bridge) enters the Lokut Dal—a placid, tranquil sheet of water clasping the lovely Sona Lank (Golden Island) which looks like a jewel in the head of a coiled serpent. The darting of fishes among the interwoven pondweed can easily be perceived through the transparent water. The bold outline of the Shálamár Range with Twin and Zobwon peaks and the Shankaráchár (Tak-net) with its stately temple, cast their shadows into the mirror-like pellucid lake. In early spring the slopes of these mountains, redolent with the fragrance of the almond blossom, the sunset and sunrise on the snow-draped mountain tops, the golden rape-seed fields offer a delicious feast to the senses of sight and smell but paralyse speech.

Kotar Khána[1] (the House of Pigeons) is a delightfully turfed headland with summer houses—an abode of peace and serenity. It is beautifully decked with garden flowers and there is an aquatic bed of imported red, yellow and white water lilies in its foreground. I would suggest the plantation of the giant water lily of tropical South America here. This flower has a diameter of one foot and a round leaf three feet in diameter with upturned edges.

The boat enters through the narrow neck of water into the Gagribal Dàl which is the nearest place for bathing. Here are bathing boats and motor launches to give people a surf-ride. Every effort is made to keep the water free from weeds. The water of Gagribal is highly praised for its lightness and purity.

Sometimes a sudden squall overcasts the sky with dark heavy clouds; the surface of the lake turns murky, the rain-drops create myriads of bubbles and the pattering of rain on lotus and lily leaves produces a mine of pearls. This in lovers' language is called Siyah Bahár (Dark Delight). Such

[1] Pigeons were once tamed here.

a scene cannot but send a thrill of ecstatic rapture through the frame of the onlooker.

The lake narrows into a channel from Gagribal. On the left is the boulevard with its grand hotels and graceful houses, while on the right are bulrush heads and islets with willow groves provide ideal harbours for house-boats. Fancy could not picture more lovely retreats for rest and relaxation. What a joy it is to be in a shikárá and have lunch or tea under a shady willow grove, surrounded by bulrushes whence issue the strident notes of the willow-warbler, whose hanging nest is seen entwining round the rushes! Close by a moorhen with red beak and white tail darts off or a dabchick emerges or a little bittern comes out to gaze at you with long neck and pointed beak, while from the trees flow out the soothing notes of a golden oriole, a ring-dove or a thrush. The mountain ranges around with various shades of blues and browns present an unforgettable flash of colour to the wondering eye.

It is a pleasant experience to watch the boys of the Mission School performing aquatic feats on the bosom of the Gagribal Dal. These sports — flat races, hand races — etc., take place every Tuesday at about 5 o'clock in the summer. The schools are divided into houses, and the crews wear the colours of their respective houses. The outstanding event in these sports is the sinking of the fleet, when all the boats at a whistle turn turtle, the crews set them right again, take out the water with their paddles and are back in their positions in $2\frac{1}{2}$ min. The band plays 'God Save the King' and 'His Highness' salute and all the crews stand up with raised paddles — a scene never to be forgotten.

What a fascinating pastime it is to come out at night at the prow or on the flat roof of a house-boat to observe the various constellations! What a satisfaction it is to recognise some of the glorious luminaries of the firmament and call

them by name! The angular height of the Pole Star from Srinagar is about 34° N. The two constellations, Ursa Major (Ursa = a bear, Major = great) and Cassiopeia (Lady's Chair) lie on opposite sides of the Pole Star. The Great Bear is known in Kashmir by the name of Sapta Reshi and the Pole Star by Dhruva. To find out the Pole Star join the two stars of the quadrangle of the Great Bear, called pointers, draw a line in imagination that will pass through the Pole Star. Or trisect the big angle of Cassiopeia which is in the form of a W; the trisector will pass through the Polaris. The Pole Star itself forms the tail of Ursa Minor (Little Bear). The Auriga (Charioteer) with its bright star Capella (the Goat) with a dim isosceles triangle, called 'Kids', close to it, Perseus (the King) with their opposite on the other side Draco (the Dragon) are some of the circumpolar constellations. The point of the trapezium of the Little Bear if produced will pass through Vega the brightest star of Lyre (the harp) and the tail of the Great Bear if lengthened will pass through Arcturus the brightest star of Bootes (the Eagle). There is a small star close to the middle one of the tail of the Great Bear. It is called Arandati by the Kashmiris. There is a local superstition that anybody who cannot see this star, is likely to die within six months.

CHAPTER V

EXCURSIONS FROM SRINAGAR

TRIPS BY BOATS

The journey by boat down the river is a very interesting experience. Starting from the Dal Gate we first see on the left the C.M.S. Hospital standing out boldly on a ridge and on the right the Golf Course. At the other extremity of the canal near the flood-gate there is on the left the All Saints Church and on the right at its confluence with the river Vetasta (Jhelum) are the English Club and Residency. Further down on the left are the Convent College and the Government Civil and Military Hospital and the Museum, and on the right there are the Post Office, the Judicial Court buildings and shops. The boat passes under Amira Kadal, the first bridge. On the left is the white mansion with the golden temple which used to be the residence of H.H. the late Maharaja Pratap Singh. Now it houses the Secretariat, almost all the Government offices being accommodated in it, The water from the Dal Gate flowing through the Tsunt Kol canal which skirts Chinár Bágh[1] falls into the river on the right. On the left is an overflow canal, Köṭa Kol, which draws water from the river to avert floods, and re-enters the river below the sixth bridge. On its left bank a grand Government Hospital is under construction.

The Haba Kadal, the second bridge, is the busiest part of the city and its medley of old and new buildings is well worth seeing. On the left is the biggest temple in Kashmir, Rugh Nath Mandir, and below it is the famous C.M.S. High

[1] Lovely site for camping and mooring boats.

School where boys receive physical, mental and moral education and which has character building as its principal aim. The principal is the Rev. Canon C. E. Tyndale-Biscoe, the reformer of Kashmir. Visitors are welcomed every Thursday morning.

The Fateh Kadal, the third bridge, is the market for curios and articles of wood-carving, papier maché, embroidery, silver work and many other objects of interest. On the right bank is the mosque of Sháh-i-Hamdán beautifully and artistically made of wooden slabs and small bricks. It is one of the most important mosques in Kashmir. In it there is a spring dedicated to the goddess Kali (Nature) sacred to Hindus.

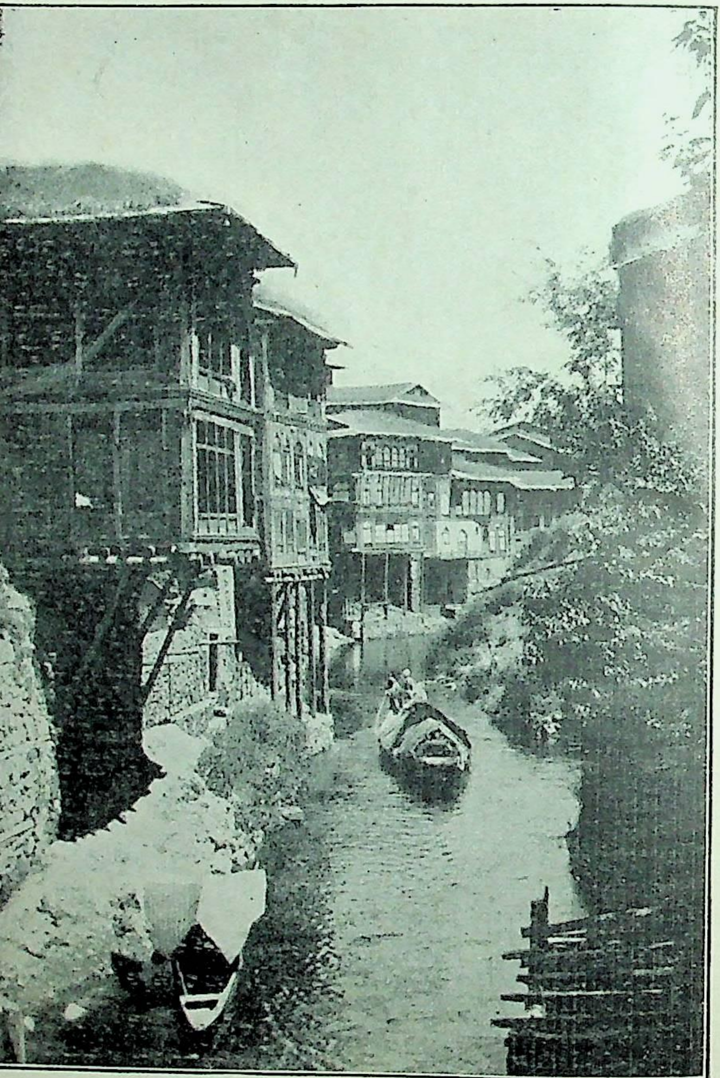
On the left bank is the Pathar[1] Masjid built by Nur Jahan. The Government handed it over to the Mahommedans and it is at present the headquarters of the National Conference.

Zaina Kadal is the fourth bridge. On the right bank are the ruins of Baḍ Sháh—comprising a mosque made of bricks and some tombs of interest belonging to the fifteenth century. These are enclosed by an old stone wall. There was a belief current among the Kashmiris that the sores caused by smallpox would get cured by the application of a brick of the Baḍ Sháh mosque rubbed in water. Closeby is the Maháráj Rambir Ganj Bázar, the chief centre of trade but this is now shifting to the first bridge. Many stonecutters' shops can be seen here. A temple built by a Kashmiri, Pandit Rama Koul, stands out as a landmark in this part of the city.

Ali Kadal, the fifth bridge, has been lately rebuilt. It is not designed for wheeled traffic. Below it on the right bank is the mosque of Bulbul Shah, the first Mahommedan fakir who converted Raintan, the Buddhist prince, to Islam as the Brahmans of the valley had refused to admit him into their fold.

Nawa[2] Kadal is the sixth bridge and here on the left

[1] Stone. [2] New bridge. Built by Saif Khan in 1664.



THE MAR CANAL

bank is the chief hospital for women, founded in honour of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria the Good. It was opened in 1899. On the right bank is the temple built by Pandit Ram Joo Dhar. It is here that the Köṭa Kol enters the river from the left.

Saffa Kadal is the seventh bridge. Closeby is the Yarkand Sarái where traders from Yarkand stay with their merchandise. Just below the bridge is the weir built to raise the level of the water in the river. The fall of water here with the fish jumping high is an interesting sight. The background of mountain ranges is fascinating.

If the water is high it is better to take the boat by the Köṭa Kol canal. On its left bank we first see the granaries of the Kashmir Valley Food Control Department. Past Tanki Kadal the boat enters the river from the left, crosses into the Tsont Kol canal, and passing under a flood-gate, finishing the circuit at the Dal Gate.

2. The Dal Lake

A number of trips can be arranged to the Moghul Gardens and to the secluded retreats of the lake. There are some charming picnic nooks between the Leper Asylum and Pokheri Bal. Formerly, at this point a canal drained the water of the Dal Lake into the Anchar[1] Lake, but it is now blocked. In July the lake is carpeted with lotus flowers.

3. The Lotus Blossom

Late July is an excellent season for enjoying the lotus blossoms. A boat may be engaged for a day and enter the Khushál Sar through the Már Canal. The lake is seen carpeted with richly flowering lotuses—a charming sight. Paddy-birds with white wings and pheasant-tailed jacanas with a plume in their tail feathers and beautiful yellow

[1] Derived from 'atsár' (cognizance). Peat is obtained from here.

throats may also be observed in the middle of the Anchár Lake. In winter when there is no water in the Már Canal, one can cycle or motor to the Anchár ghat, hire a boat and busy one's self here studying jack-snipes, pochards, gadwals, mallards, teals and dabchicks.

4. Ganderbal[1]

Across the Anchár Lake and up the Sind river, or, along the Jhelum via Shádipor.

It is the spot where the Sind, rising from the Harmoukh and the Amar Náth glaciers, enters the plain stage. The turfy banks and shady chinárs afford excellent camping plots and mooring sites for boats. A branch of this river enters into the Anchár Lake where several trips can be arranged for bird observation and lotus blossom. There are some charming picnic recesses. The eastern shore abounds in floating gardens (Rád). It will take about three hours by the Már Canal and about six hours by the Jhelum. It is about 12 miles by land from Srinagar.

The spring of Khirbhawáni is 2½ miles from here. The water of this spring changes colour into rosy red, light rosy, green, dark green, diluted milky and light blue. It is a phenomenon worthy for the research of a scientist.

At Ganderbal, there is a dispensary, and a post and telegraph office.

5. The Manasbal Lake

en route to the Wular Lake.

6. The Wular[2] Lake

The doonga (house boat) takes a day to reach Banayári the point where the river enters the lake. The lake should be negotiated before noon, as it is often windy in the afternoon.

[1] Place of Gandárh (god songsters).

[2] Derived from Sanskrit, 'Ullola'. (The lake with high-going waves.)

The wind is dangerous when it blows from Nága Marg, and it is then called Nága Kôn. The deepest part of the lake is towards Baba Shukar Din side. It is called Möta Khon, (the Gulf of Corpses) because the current carries all dead bodies into it.

A good mooring spot is Sodur Koṭ, where the boat can be punted up through canals. A delightful view can be had from the green spur of Sodur Koṭ where there are the remains of an old fort.

TRIPS ON CYCLES

(*a*) Starting from the Dal Gate along the Boulevard, we leave on our right the Distillery and the Royal Palace and on our left a transparent sheet of water, where the holiday-makers bathe, dive, swim and bask in the sun on the flat planked roofs of bathing boats. The greenness of the vegetation, especially after a rainy day, presents one of the most unique sights in the world. Between the fourth and fifth miles the road branches off towards Chashma-i Sháhi. Moving between apple, pear, cherry, and apricot gardens and newly-built houses we come to Nishát. Leaving Nishát we come to Ishibör, where there is a spring under a grove of walnut and Boin (chinár) trees. The stretch of land on the left is swampy and is covered with Veronica, water cress and Mentha sylvestris. Closeby is the State farm where experiments for the cultivation of various kinds of crops are carried on. Have your lunch in Shálamár Garden. You are eight miles from the Dal Gate. It is now three miles from Harwan, where there is the great reservoir which supplies water to the city. There is a bungalow on the slope of the hill where Lord Minto II stayed when he visited Kashmir. Near the garden are the trout-culture farm and the excavations of a monastery dating back to A.D. 300.

Return by the causeway which starts from the Nishát

Bágh. The water to the city is conveyed in pipes laid on this dam. Land when you come to a bridge, lean on its railing and drink deep of the natural beauty around you. You emerge at Náyid Yár (Rainawari). The road will lead you to the C.M.S. Hospital, Rainawari and from here direct to the Dal Gate.

(*b*) Start from the Dal Gate along the Nasim Bágh road for Nasim which is five miles away. Thence make for Shálamár through gardens, fields and villages. On the way is a picturesque bridge (Onta Kadal) on the way to Náyid Yár then to the Mission Hospital, and on to the Dal Gate. (Part of the road is unmetalled, hence not fit for bad weather.)

(*c*) The Mánasbal Lake is about 18 miles from Srinagar. The main road branches off at about the fifth mile into what is called the Gilgit Road. We come to Shádipor and cross the river at Sumbal. Here we get a glimpse of the lake. About ten miles from here is Sodur Koṭ and from its grassy spur a perfect view of the Wular Lake can be had. Return by the Ganderbal Road (not fit for bad weather).

Wayil Bridge, 18 miles via Ganderbal—view of the Sind Valley.

(*d*) The Banihal cartroad branches off on this side of Pampor, towards Zewan. This spur contains fossils[1] worth studying. Further on at Woin there are sulphur springs. Near Khonamoh village on the mountain ridge there is a natural cave dedicated to Shiva called Harshishwar[2]. The mouth of the cave is believed to close every year the length of a barley grain and a rock outside the cave growing so much bigger. There is a natural *lingam* inside the cave and a quartz vein on the ceiling which drips water is called Vasak

[1] The fossils kindly identified by Mr. W. D. West of Geological Survey of India are: Spirifer (Brachiopod), Lythonia (Brachiopod), Protorekopora (Bryozoa), Productus, Indet.

[2] Harsh = ecstacy. Ishwar = lord.

Nág (the Lord of Serpents). It is visited by Hindus on New Moon and Full Moon.

(*e*) Minor trips can be taken to:

The Museum, the Silk Factory, and the Böd Masjid (Jama Masjid). The museum is housed in an exquisite building. It contains a natural history section where wild ducks and other birds and stuffed animals are arranged. Types of men found in the State, old paintings, stones and minerals, shawls of different designs, ancient writings on birch bark and Kashmiri paper are some of its other features. The office of the Meteorological Observatory and the Public Library are also housed in the same building.

The following cycle trips are also suggested:

(*a*) Dal Gate via Rainawari along the causeway to the Moghul Gardens and back to Dal Gate, via boulevard.

(*b*) Dal Gate to Nasim Bagh then to Shálamár and Nishát and back by the causeway or boulevard are recommended. The cyclist is reminded not to forget to carry lunch and tea.

(*c*) Dal Gate via Gagribal to Chashma-i-Sháhi.

(*d*) About two miles from the Dal Gate on the Ganderbal Road is a small building called Roza Bal near Dastagir Sahib's Mosque. Local tradition calls it the tomb of a prophet named Yusa Asaf who was of unusually tall stature. When he died and was buried, this tomb was erected on the navel of his body. A stone which is about 20 yards away from the place, marks the extent of his feet.

TRIPS BY MOTOR CAR

1. To the Moghul Gardens along the boulevard, not missing the Harwan Reservoir and excavations.

2. To the Manasbal Lake about 18 miles from Srinagar. At the fifth mile on the Jhelum Valley Road turn to the right and cross the river by the Sumbal Bridge.

A view of the Wular can be had from Sodur Koṭ about ten miles from Mánasbal. Motor along the shore of the lake and return by the Ganderbal Road.

3. To Gulmarg. Gulmarg is 25 miles from Srinagar via Mágám. From Tang Marg to Gulmarg is an ascent of three miles, which can be done on ponies.

4. To Sonamarg. It is about 51 miles from Srinagar. A charming view of certain glaciers can be had from here.

5. To Pahalgam. It is 6l miles from Srinagar. The drive is through rice fields and the scenery is grand. On the way, the ruins of the Pandrenthan[1] temple near the cantonment, Atwantipor temples of Shiva built in the ninth century A.D., the spring at Anant Nág (Islamabad), the sulphur spring of Malak Nág (rather reglected), the spring at Bawan, the Martand temple built by Lalitaditya (A.D. 693–720) are all interesting. The cave temple at Bumzov is worth seeing. Returning from Pahalgám one can visit the Achhabal Garden. Here is a fountain of water gushing out of a mountain-side. It is believed to come out of the Brangi river which disappears at Dewalgám. Kookar Nág springs are highly appreciated for their drinking water.

Kulgám Valley. Fishing plentiful. View charming. A road branches off from Khanabal (surface good in fair weather).

Nila Nag

Nila Nág is a beautiful spring, 23 miles from Srinagar on the aerodrome route. The wheeled traffic is as far as Nágám 11 miles from Srinagar, and pony-track 12 miles from Nágám to Nila Nág. It can be made base camp for climbing some peaks in the Pantsál Range.

Consult *Beautiful Valleys of Kashmír* (pages 14–24)

[1] This temple was built by King Partha's minister, Meru, in the beginning of the tenth century and was dedicated to Vishnu. The stone of the ceiling is artistically carved.



NANGA PARBAT, THE UNCONQUERED

CHAPTER VI

MOUNTAIN CLIMBS

1. Shankarachar Hill or Takhet. A pony track.

2. The Zobwan Peak.

Start early from Aita Gaji Gap outside the fence through almond gardens. The footpath is good. The ascent is gradual. Higher up, the path enters a belt of pines which ends on the summit. The path along the ridge to the twin peaks has several steep descents and ascents, The ravines are thickly covered with witch-hazel trees where occasionally a black bear may be encountered. Antelopes sometimes may be seen. To avoid the thorn bushes, the path which leads down the twin peak spur should be followed right up to Chashma-i-Sháhi.

3. Twin Peaks[1]

Start at 7 a.m. from Chashma-i-Sháh. Go along the path to the foot of the hill. Avoid thorns on the right. Follow the path. As you ascend higher and higher the valley opens, you see the mountain range and the plain below bathed in sunlight. Have your lunch at the summit and return to have tea at Chashma-i-Sháhi. The whole range is a Reserve.

4. Mahadiv

It is possible to do the climb in one day. Drive to Harwan. Start at 6 a.m. Dwará is the last village. There is a hut at Dwara Wön where a bridge crosses the stream. It

[1] Permission to enter within limits can be secured from the Controller, Shikár Khána.

is possible to get milk here. Another hut is at Nila Pantsál. Bobjan is five miles from Dwará and Ledwás (10,500 ft.) is five miles from Bobjan. Ledwás is a meadow. Here are five or six temporary sheds of Gujars in the middle valley ascent to the col. From here go along the lower slope of the ridge over the boulders and you will reach the summit (13,013 ft.) in six or seven hours. The view of the mountain ranges stretching in front is magnificent. Among the boulders in the grassy spots rich floral vegetation grows. The Mecrotimia Benthami, the wild rhubarb, the Allim, Hedysarum Cachemirianum, the Jurnea macrocephela and many other varieties are common. Griffon vultures may be seen hovering round the peaks. The peaks may be attempted by the southern side also. The descent may take three to four hours, depending on the speed of the trekker.

5. There are some other peaks which can be attempted but they will take seven to ten days.

1. Romesh Thong (The Sunset Peak) (15,000 ft.)
2. Tata Koti ... ... (15,645 ft.)
3. Harmoukh ... ... (16,842 ft.)
4. Kolahoi ... ... (17,779 ft.)

Consult the *Beautiful Valleys of Kashmir*.

A Mahadiv Climb

Mahádiv (13,013 ft.) is a conspicuous peak to the north-east of Srinagar overlooking the Dal Lake. An isolated spur towards the south about 12,000 ft. high is the sacred spot which is visited by Hindu pilgrims on the full moon day in August, which is also the day when pilgrims worship in the Amar Nath Cave. A grand view can be obtained from the summit of all the higher peaks of the mountain ranges which encompass the valley—on the east Kolahoi and

Nun Khun; on the south and west the Brahma Shakri, Romesh Thong and Tatakoti; on the north, Nanga and Harmoukh; while the valley is set among the surrounding mountain ranges like an emerald slab fretted with silvery sheets and streaks of lakes and rivers and embossed with the amber of arid portions. Alluvial plateaus are spread beneath these ranges.

The climb of Mahádiv can be performed in one day, two days or three days. The main secret of reducing the difficulties of the climb to a minimum is to start early—about 6 a.m. from Dwará. Arrangements for coolies should be made beforehand from Harwan village and they should be told to meet either at Farm Bagh or at Shálamár. He who aims at climbing to the summit in one day should take a coolie carrying all his foodstuff with him, while he who attempts it in two or three days must carry a light tent and pitch it at Ledwás. He should also carry all necessaries except firewood.

Dwará is about 800 ft. higher than Srinagar and is 14 miles away. One can drive up to the Farm Bagh which is full of Spanish chestnuts, apples pseudo-acacia, cherry and other fruit trees and is a good camping ground outside the New Thid. It would be a pleasant trip by boat to Shálamár, where coolies to be arranged beforehand should be told to meet. On both sides of the road from Shálamár to Dwará there are paddy-fields which in some places are in terrace-formation. Orioles, thrushes, ring doves and shrikes are heard warbling on the trees while the bulbul with its grey crest and yellow vent is seen flitting along the roadside.

The path from Dwará passes through a close defile, by the right bank of the stream, carving cascades and pools round which whistling thrushes, redstarts and occasionally forktails catch their prey above the spray. From the bush-covered

slopes of the mountains are heard the notes of the bush chat and pale bush warblers. The guelder (Kulim) whose lovely blossoms adorn the early spring, the hazel (virin), the ash, the maple, the wild walnut and the chestnut are some of the trees which shade the path. About three miles from Dwará is Dárawön where the path passes a bridge and there is a Gujar hut. It is pleasant to breakfast here. At Nila Pantsal there is another hut. Some ravines retain snow throughout the whole year and this is taken by coolies to various hotels for the preparation of cool drinks in summer months. There is a hamlet of four temporary huts at Bobjen (7,500 ft.) on the left bank of the stream. There we see a large variety of Alpine flowers. Cynoglossum and Mentha selvestris are in profusion. This place is about six miles from Dwará. The ascent from here is moderately steep and pines clothe the mountain side till we reach Ledwás which is the corrupt form of Rudrawás[1] (11,000 ft.) which is ten miles from Dwará and takes about five or six hours to reach. It is from here that the birch and Rhododendron campanulatum show their heads. The flowers of the latter are dried and used as snuff for bad colds.

Here we come across five or six temporary sheds of Gujars who migrate here for the summer months. Sites for pitching tents under pines are clearly marked.

Ledwas

Ledwas is a meadow where Alpine flowers rear their heads. As soon as the snow thaws the primulas burst into blossom. The buttercups and pedicularis are met with in plenty. Sometimes even in early June the valleys are covered with snow. There are three valleys leading to the highest peak. To gain the summit the usual way is to go up the middle valley leading up to the middle pass—Wover Gol (Weaver's

[1] Abode of Rudra.

Pass) being flanked by a ridge and being marked by many ascents and descents dotted with boulders. Among these boulders, the wild rhubarb. the Allium (wan prán) the borage, Mocrotomia Benthami, Fritillery Royleana, Androoia and Sedum may be found. It is possible to attempt the peak from the south. The glorious view which unrols before the conqueror of the peak is an ample reward for his strenuous climb. If time is of no importance in descending one may spend a night at Ledwás, or if he is in a hurry, it will take him five or six hours to reach Shálamár.

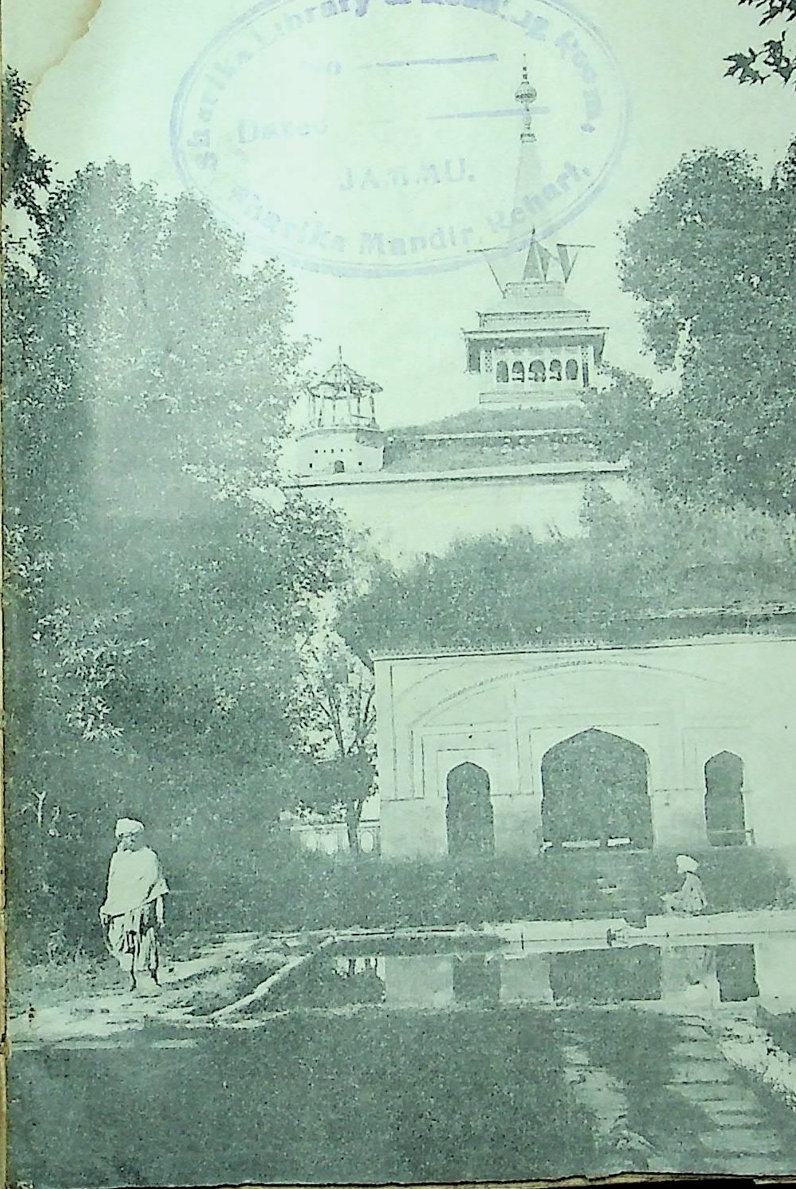
CHAPTER VII

MÁNASBAL

Mánasbal is a delightful lake situated on the Jhelum Valley at a distance of 18 miles from Srinagar via Shadipor, and 17 miles via Nasim and Ganderbal road. The word Mánasbal is derived from Manusarwar, the sacred lake which skirts the Kailás Mountain along with Gauri-Sar and Rakhas Taláv. As it was very difficult for Kashmir Hindus to go on such a far-off pilgrimage, they satisfied their religious craving by naming the secluded sheet of green water Mánasbal.

This is not the only instance of the derivation of geographical names in this manner. The shrine of Sháradá up in the Northern mountains is several marches from Srinagar. In order to avoid the difficult journey to the shrine without losing the merit of a visit to it, the Brahmans of Srinagar have named a small spring to the north-east of the reservoir, Shárad Bal. The water of this spring contains medical properties and is highly digestive. It is under a huge chenár outside New Thid. Vitsár Nág which is five miles from Srinagar is called Ailapatör after the lake to the west of Gulmarg.

A journey by a doonga house-boat occupies about six hours. The boat leaves the Chattabal Weir and glides downward propelled by two or more paddles. The passengers lounge leisurely in the boat, their eyes open to the sights which meet them from various directions. White vultures, crows and kites are seen feeding on floating carcasses, while kingfishers blue and pied are busy hovering



over their prey. The holes in the river bank are made by these birds and deserted nests are used by sparrows and hoopoes. In April the river banks are gracefully carpeted with yellow-blossomed rape-seed fields and blue iris beds. It behoves lovers of colours to attire themselves in yellow, eat yellow-coloured rice and sit and observe the play of colours under a peach-blossomed tree and compassed by rape-seed fields. I do not recommend this for a person afflicted with jaundice. Any distracting noise will be the hum of bees gathering nectar. The call of a fish-eagle, with white head and white bars in the tail, may sometimes be heard.

As the boat moves down, the mountain peaks in the east —Mahádiv, Koṭwál and Harmoukh stand out conspicuously. There are lovely, shady, chinár groves where the boat can be moored for some time. One of these is Nárán Bagh opposite Shádipor where the Sind enters the Vetasta (Jhelum) from the Gangabal lakes. In the middle of the river is an islet shaded by a dwarf chinár. This is a holy spot called Prayág and is a miniature representation of the Prayág (Allahabad) of the plains. Thousands of pilgrims gather here in boats when there are ten stellar combinations. There is a waterway from here to the Khir-Bhawáni spring which is worth a visit. The occasional changes in the colour of the water of the spring invest the Hindu shrine with mystic sanctity in the eyes of its votaries.

About two miles from Shádipor on the alluvial plateaus of Paraspor and Divar are the remains of old temples and other shrines dedicated to Vishnu, Buddha and Shiva and built by the renowned king Lalitaditya, his queens and ministers in the heyday of their glory, about A.D. 700. They contained gold, silver and copper images of enormous value. A stone minaret 54 ft. high with the bird Garuḍa resting on its top served as a flag. The enormous size of the stones in

these ruins and the exquisiteness of their dressing and finish, strike the onlooker with wonder. A graphic account of these buildings is given in *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir* on pages 146–149. The course of the Vetasta then lay along the side of the plateau. It was afterwards diverted by the great engineer Suya in Avantivarman's reign (A.D. 855–883). Shádipor, which was founded by Sultan Sháb-ud-Din (1337-1354), is one of the important fishing centres. Fishermen in small boats sweep the river with various kinds of nets. The fish belong to the following varieties: (1) Chhriw has a dark spotted back, white belly and a large pointed mouth. Some of these weigh more than 12 lb. (2) Sattar Gád has also spots of various colours and white sides. (3) Ail Gád is black in colour. (4) Chesh Gád has a small mouth and is white in colour. (5) Ráma Gurun is a small fish with black bars on its back. (6) Anyur. (7) Rupit Gád.

The fish of the Sind are prized more than those of the Jhelum. It is said that the best fish are found at the time of the rape-seed blossom and near those fields. Probably the reason is that the reflection of the yellow blossom falling in the river attracts the fish.

Sumbal is the next important village. Just outside the village on the river bank are some huge chinárs and an elm, enclosed by a wall. This spot is sacred to the Hindus and dedicated to Nanda-ki-shuwar. A temple has been lately built there. The Gilgit Road passes through the village. A little lower down the water from the Mánasbal Lake flows through the canal which is its only outlet into the Jhelum. There is a small village over this canal. A close examination of the masonry walls supporting the bridge on either side leaves little doubt as to the existence of temples in the ancient time on the shores of the lake. In these walls are seen stone images which must undoubtedly have adorned some Buddhist temples.

The boat is towed or punted up the canal shaded with willow to the mouth of the lake. Herons, starlings and frogs are seen in the fields. When the water of the river is high, the peasants dam the water at the bridge, to save their fields from inundation.

There are two camping sites on the shore of the lake. One is near the ruined Moghul Garden built by Nur Jahán, as the local peasants say. This is called Garoka or Joroga, which means a bay window. It signifies a royal mansion with a highly ornamented and artistically built pavilion, with a seat on the window for the Moghul queen, from which she could survey the charming lake. It is possible that Aha Teng (6,256 ft.) the hillock bordering the lake in the south was in those days clothed with groves of cypress, the most favourite garden tree of the Moghul monarchs. There are four terraces at the foot of the ruined wall. One is practically silted up. The Government might with profit restore this site, lay out a garden or build a rest-house in it. Here can be seen a big chinár tree and a slab of stone belonging to some old temple. When the water of the lake is very low a submerged temple can be seen, roofed like a quadrangular prism. The other encampment site stands at the farther end of the lake under chinárs known as Pádsháh Boni (Royal Chinárs). This is one of the best camping sites in Kashmir. This spot is also called Qöz Bágh, having probably been planted by the Moghul judge. A canal taken from Sind by the great king of Kashmir popularly known as Baḍ Sháh (A.D. 1421-1472) irrigates the alluvial plateau of Safápor. Closeby is a cave, dug by a fakir whose grave lies just outside it, near a small shrine. He came from India and married a Kashmiri girl. The soil is sandy and this may lead to the cave being closed one day.

The northern and eastern shores of the lake are riddled with springs and covered with watercress. On the south-

eastern side a stream from the Sind enters into the lake. There appears a fissure right in the middle of the lake running east to west.

On the north-east of the lake there is a village called Konda-Bal (Kiln Place). This village owes its existence to a quarry from which stones are sent to Srinagar. The stones are burnt for lime. The pebbles are preferred for macadamised roads and are known as mánsbal rōd. It is an excellent site for founding a cement factory.

What a pleasure is a cruise on the lake! The land shelf (submerged bank) is covered with various kinds of pondweed, Naais Major and water milfoil in which fish are seen darting about. As the boat moves outwards the colour becomes turf green, perfectly weedless and refreshing to the vision. The high mountain wall which surrounds the lake renders tranquillity impregnable to all external disturbing forces. The air breathes peace and the care-worn heart is soothed. The delight of diving and bathing as experienced here beggar description.

Fishermen are often seen standing on the prows of their light boats, their eyes scanning the depths of the lake for fish and their hands holding a spear with which to strike and catch the fish. Sometimes one may see a hook and line used for this purpose. The line is about 1,000 yards long and a hook with a weight is placed after every yard, a small fish being used as a bait. After two days the line is taken out and the fishes are captured. We took soundings at five places and the depth was between 30 and 40 feet, but in some places it must be much more.

It is worth while to attempt a climb, if not to the top of Krosh Peak, which is used as a station by the survey party of India and stands at a height of 10,300 ft. above sea level, at least to lower heights from where the finest sights in the world burst into view.

The ascent begins from the Mánasbal Gap. The spur is devoid of trees but the gems of Nature raise their heads among the rocks and on gravelly paths. The conspicuous flower is the Eremurus himalaicus with radical leaves and white flowers on a stout raceme. Beds of iris and Kashmir tulips decorate the path. The higher one climbs th emore attractive becomes the panorama. The valley unrolls, like a cinema reel, scene after scene of the rarest beauty before the spectator.

In front of him rises the Pantsál Barrier with its flat top covered with dazzling snow, the peaks of the range, Tatakoti, Romesh-Thong (Sunset Peak) Brahma Shakar, all over 15,000 ft., project like crystal cones draped in silver sheets. The forest-clad slopes are seen steeped in sombre light and the dark shades of blue which play on them are beyond the power of pen to describe. On the far east we see Nun-Khun over 23,000 ft., and Gwashi-Brari, above 18,000 ft., towering giants which appear to stand sentinel on the valley. The whole place spreads out like a chequered carpet of patches of green and yellow, standing against the silver expanse of the Wular, the Anchar and the other lakes, while the Harwan Reservoir twinkles like a star in the Eastern corner. The majestic sinuous flow of the Vetasta (Jhelum) emptying itself into the Wular and flowing out towards Sopor adds greatly to the beauty of the valley.

The greater part of the valley appears covered with water which lends support to the view that Kashmir was once a lake.

Higher up the climbing is over rocks and one has to be rather sure-footed to reach the top of the peak. It is possible to have snow near the summit—which is crowned with a cluster of fir trees—as late as early May. Patches of Saxifraga ligulata and Corydalis rutaefolia variegate the landscape here. This climb should always be tried in the early part of the

day. The essential equipment should include water, carried in bags or bottles. On one occasion we assembled with the boys and we offered a prayer for the peace of the world.

A tourist who has not much time to spare can pay a flying visit to the lake in a car. I suggest the route, Srinagar via Shádi-por, crossing the bridge at Sumbal and leaving the car on the eastern shore of the lake under the Pádsháh chinár; where he can have his breakfast. He can then hire a boat from a fisherman and have his lunch under the chinár at Jaroga Moghul garden. Next he can drive his car through the fields, and the cherry and apple gardens and have his tea at Násim Bágh on the Dal Lake watching the whiskered terns skimming along the surface of the water and return for supper to his hotel or camp.

With his base camp at Mánasbal a tourist may make excursions as follows:

1. Kher-bawani about six miles. The famous spring changes colour occasionally and is sacred to Hindus.
2. Mánasbal to Kangan, 16 miles; Kangan to Gund, 13 miles; Gund to Sonamarg, 14 miles. A car now runs direct to Sonamarg.
3. Mánasbal to Ráma Rádan, via Vusan (not a good camping ground); Ráma-Rádan to Malish, climb to Bharat Bal, about six hours (start early); Malish to Ganga-bal, about three hours along the meadow; Ganga-bal to Wañgath, 12 miles; Wañgath to Gander-bal, 13 miles. (Consult *The Beautiful Valleys of Kashmir*, pages 114-122.)
4. To the sulphur spring near the road, not far from Ajus.
5. Mánasbal to Erin Valley.

   Mánasbal to Nöd-hal; Nöd-hal to Kiud-or; Kiu-dor to Sar-bal lakes.



SONAMARG

CHAPTER VIII

SONAMARG

Sonamarg is a charming valley, 51 miles to the north-east of Srinagar. It is about 9,000 ft. above sea level. There is a legend that somewhere in the valley lies a well, the water of which has the property of turning anything into gold; this is the origin of the name Sonamarg (golden meadow).

The road to Sonamarg runs through the rich Sind Valley drained by the Sind River, flanked on one side by the densely forested mountain slopes and on the other by a bank covered for the most part by the bush, Indigoferra hereantha. Often the passerby hears the note of the pale bush-warbler which cannot be mistaken. The road is now open to wheeled traffic and in the near future Sonamarg will be a rival summer resort to Gulmarg and Pahalgám. There are two rest houses on the road, one is at Kangan and the other at Gund, but there are no catering arrangements at present. The tourists' committee is doing its best to open up the country extensively, making it easy for visitors to reach every delightful nook of the valley.

There is a short-cut to the marg which saves at least 15 miles, via Shálamár and Dwará across the Háyan Pass. It starts from Dwará and is a pony track. The Sind slope is well forested and there are many varieties of Alpine flowers on either side of the road. The view of the Dal Lake, the city and the peaks of Pantsál Barrier from the top of the pass is charming. Some of the flowers are Lillium Polyphyllum, large yellow Potentillas, Strobilanthes alatus (Acantheacea family) and asters. There is a forest hut on

the other side of the pass in the Sind valley commanding a fine view. The path meets the general road exactly at the Ganiwan Bridge. The river abounds in fish and trout, a joy to the angler.

A neighbour of mine told me an interesting story pertaining to a time when he happened to be at Akahál, which is the corrupt form of Máhákál (Great Time), the Angel of Death, who is the guardian saint of the spring found there. The village is on the left bank of the Sind, four miles from Háyan. He saw a party of five men panting and running, and falling down unconscious when they entered the house where he was.

Presently, he brought some sugar and water and opening their mouths poured it into them one by one. When they came to their senses they related to him the following story. They had taken the contract of felling the trees in the forest. When they crossed the Háyan Pass they sat under a pine to rest. While sitting, one of them absent-mindedly scratching the ground with a piece of twig found the top of a plant. This aroused his curiosity and he dug deeper and deeper, till he rooted the plant out. He took it in his hand to look at it. Presently, he saw in front of him a completely nude 'nymph' demanding the plant. The man with downcast looks addressed the lady: 'Are you not ashamed of standing quite naked in front of men!' She smiled. Then more nude 'nymphs' joined her. The man got frightened and handed over the plant to them. They all disappeared. The men ran away in terror. They heard behind them the beating of thousand of drums and the blowing of trumpets till they entered the house where they fell senseless.

The valley is encompassed by mountains ranging from 14,000 to 16,000 ft. above sea-level. A well forested hillock, the spur of Thájiwás Range, divides the valley into two parts, Sonamarg and Thájiwás.

Sonamarg is drained by the Sind River which rises from the glaciers and springs of the Amar Nath Range. It is an extensive meadow. Clover is very common all over it. Alderberry is also abundant. It is a valley in which avalanches work havoc. The mountain slopes are obviously responsible for this.

As one enters the valley, the eye falls on a village of about a dozen huts, called Shita Kör. Their plight in winter when their huts are buried under snow must be similar to that of the Lapps. The produce of their fields is very scanty. In summer, of course, they are in Paradise, provided they have enough to eat. On the extreme end of the valley are the Police Chowki and the Telegraph Office. The telegraph master is also postmaster and meteorological observer. The servants of these officers have built houses on the right bank of the river. In winter they find it difficult to cross over owing to heavy snowfalls.

Thájiwás is an excellent camping site. It contains miniature plateaus naturally separated into distinct compartments. It is also well shaded with pines. It is watered by a lovely spring, and a torrent which is fed from the adjoining snowfield and glacier on the mountain range. The banks and islets are not devoid of floral beauty. Corydalis and Pedicularis grace the shady nooks.

Thájiwás has a rest house nestling among pines. It was the favourite camping site of Dr. Neve who used to carry on medical work for the benefit of the people living in this part of the country.

It is worth while to pay a visit to one of the glaciers. I specially recommend the one which lies on the extreme end of the valley beyond the snowfield. Outside the camping area there is a level spot containing a sheepfold and further on there is a grove of birch trees. The path to the fourth glacier

leads along the right bank of the stream on to the snowfield which is littered over with pieces of ice broken from the avalanches which sweep down the glaciers from time to time. Great care should be taken that the snow over the stream is not loose or else a watery grave with a yawning mouth awaits the traveller. Climbing over the sandy and shaley ridge profusely covered with Allardia tomentosa (a kind of pink daisy with ashy leaves) one may be able to reach the glaciers. The snowfield continues right on to the col called Hápat Ganḍ (Bear's Knot) which possibly leads to one of the peaks of the mountain system. If the traveller walks through the valley with a watchful eye he may be rewarded with pieces of crystal, sometimes seen among the pebbles dislodged from the mountain slope.

In contra-distinction to the geological theory about the formation of crystals, there is a belief among the people here that crystal is formed from the ice imbedded in the earth for a considerable period through chemical changes. A snowflake being hexagonal, the crystals also have the same shape.

A delightful diversion for an afternoon is a climb over the ridge which separates Sonamarg from Thájiwás. The Sonamarg slope of the ridge is steep and densely covered with firs and birch trees. The ascent on the Thájiwás side is gradual and the path begins just opposite the first glacier. It passes through the alder-berry plants, then under the sycamore trees, the leaves of which bear a striking resemblance to those of the chinár tree. Higher up the path continues under trees, turns a little to the left, and leads to a settlement of Bakörbáns. As we climb higher and higher we seem every now and then to see peaks which are not real peaks. As we leave the tree belt, we find ourselves on the grassy slopes of the mountains. The slope is really a lovely flower garden. A stretch of Marino coulteriana with its lemon-yellow flowers and prickly leaves gracefully decorates

the margin of the slope. Every variety of Alpine flowers is there; of course edelweiss not excluded. From the highest point of the ridge on a clear day the view is superb. The sight of glaciers which cover the Thájiwás Range and the water flowing from them in sīlvery streaks, as if falling through sieves from the slippery rocks above, is highly pleasing. The ring of conical ashy-coloured peaks appears like a flock of herons pecking the sky. A snow peak peeping through a hole in the clouds is a thrilling sight. The soil on the slope is yellow, hence during rain it is muddy and sticky.

While descending we saw an animal larger than a jackal, with a long tail, brown colour a white band over the back and tail, running over the ridge with a tilt of the hind legs. We were told that it must have been a wolf.

There are a few places round about which are worth visiting.

Nilagrád (not a Russian village) is a settlement of Baltis, about four miles from Sonamarg. This village will give an idea of life in Baltistan. Some of these people in times past built a few huts on the area between Sonamarg and Thájiwás. A woman died there. Every winter this woman would appear to them wrapped in a sheet and shroud. The people got frightened and deserted the village. The foundations of the huts are still there.

A small stream falls into the Sind near Sonamarg. The sediment of the stream is red. Every Sunday morning Baltis come here to bathe. They believe bathing here cures some diseases.

Baltal (Under-mountain) is nine miles from Sonamarg. A route goes from here to Amar Nath cave. It is passable only during June when the snow pavement over the torrent is still hard. Later on the snow becomes loose and going over the ice is dangerous. It is not a pony track.

Another route from here goes to Har Nág and thence to Arau and Pahalgam. The third route runs over the important Zoji La Pass to Baltistan. The path, though comparatively low, is supposed to be the most perilous of all the Himalayan passes. In winter heavy snowfall and avalanches block it for some time. In summer the floral vegetation is magnificent. How refreshing to a traveller from Baltistan is the sight of the green valley drained by the serpentine, silvery Sind! There is a rest-house under the trees on a raised piece of ground. The sweet music of the goldfinches, cinnamon-headed finches and bull-finches is most thrilling.

The Rudrawás side is infested with snakes. One of us went in search of a shepherd with a guide who killed six small and two biggish snakes. While we were having a camp-fire with big dried tree trunks, an adder came out of a hole in a tree. It was dark grey with chequered back and thin tail. It was about two feet long and two inches thick in the middle.

There are some charming lakes, Vishna Sar, etc., about two marches from Sonamarg across the Zöj Marg which are worth seeing. When the metalled road to Sonamarg is completed and extended to Baltal, engineering skill will surely finish it at the Amar Náth Cave, and it will then be irresistibly alluring to the hiker to go by Sonamarg and return by Pahalgam.



CHAPTER IX

WILD FLOWERS

Some of the wild flowers which grow round Srinagar and their indigenous use.

PEGASUS HERMALA

Kashmiri name ... Isband
English name ... Rue
Family ... ... Malvaceae
Locality ... ... Malla Kháh

Uses.—It has a white flower. The ashes of this plant are used in washing the hair and the leaves are fatal to bugs. The seeds are burnt on wedding days to avert the evil eye.

MALVA SYLVESTRIS

Kashmiri name ... Sotsal
English name ...
Family ... ... Malvaceae
Locality ... ... Waste lands.
Also cultivated.

Uses.—It is a pot-herb. The seeds are used in decoction (sherbat). The root has a lubricating value and is used in ænemia.

CANNABIS SATIVA

Kashmiri name ... Bhanga
English name ... Hemp
Family ... ... Labiatae
Locality ... ... River banks

Uses.—It grows mostly above Pampor on both the banks of the Vetasta. Its fibre is used for making ropes and for

anchoring boats. The *cheras*, an intoxicating drug, is made from this plant in three ways.—

1. The live plant is rubbed by hands and sticky substance is collected.

2. The pollen dust.

3. The dry plant is pounded and sifted. The material is placed in the maize-cob sheath, or paper or birch bark and well-wrapped in rush and baked in hot ashes. It is then smoked mixed with tobacco.

Lanatuma marrubrium

Kashmiri name	...	Tropör
English name	...	
Family ...	...	Labiatae
Locality ...	...	Waste lands

Uses.—It bears a white flower. It is boiled in kanja and applied to a rheumatic limb.

Melilotus alba

Kashmiri name	...	
English name	...	
Family ...	...	Labiatae
Locality ...	...	Shankaráchár

Uses.—The flowers which are on a raceme are white. The flowering season is August, September. The leaves have delicious fragrance.

Salvia moorcroftiana

Kashmiri name	...	Sholur
English name	...	
Family ...	...	Labiatae
Locality ...	...	Hari Parbat and Shankaráchár

Uses.—It has bluish white flowers.

Mentha sylvestus

Kashmiri name ... Wena
English name ... Horse-mint
Family ... ... Labiatae

Uses.—The leaves have an acute fragrance, and are used as flowers in worship by the Hindus. Mixed with salt and chili, it is eaten as *chetni*, and is considered very stimulating.

Plectranthus rugosus

Kashmiri name ... Mádal
English name ...
Family ... ... Labiatae
Locality ... ... Shankaráchár and sandy soil

Uses.—It has grey-white flowers and sweet fragrance. The leaves are used in worship by Hindus.

A decoction of leaves is given to a person fallen from some height.

Thymus serphyllum

Kashmiri name ... Jáwen
English name ... Thyme
Family ... ... Labiatae
Locality ... ... Hári Parbat, Shankaráchár, sandy soil

Uses.—The plant bears pink flowers in clusters. Their jam is an excellant stomach tonic. It is also put in Kanja (sadurkönz). It is good for weak sight, stomach and liver troubles. It can be used to flavour vegetable or fish.

Artemisa moorcroftiana

Kashmiri name ... Teṭhawen
English name ...
Family ... ... Compositae
Locality ...

Uses.—The leaves are made into a pill as a medicine for worms. It is also used to protect clothes and paper against fish insects.

CARDUUS NUTANS

Kashmiri name	...	Konḍ posh
English name	...	Thistle
Family ...	...	Compositae
Locality ...	...	Gardens and waste lands

Uses.—It is a thistle with a crimson flower. Its root dug in autumn mixed with cane-sugar, half and half, is taken as a medicine for neural diseases.

TARAXACUM OFFICINALE

Kashmiri name	...	Maidán hand
English name	...	Dandelion
Family ...	...	Compositae
Locality ...	...	Outside Srinagar

Uses.—It has a yellow flower. It is a potherb. When dried, it is well cooked and applied to a sprained limb.

CICHORIUM INTYBUS

Kashmiri name	...	Won hand
English name	...	Chicbory
Family ...	...	In fields

Uses.—It has a beautiful blue flower. It is used as a vegetable and is given to women after child-birth.

DATURA STRAMONIUM

Kashmiri name	...	Datur
English name	...	
Family ...	...	Solanaceae
Locality ...	...	Waste lands

Uses.—It bears a white trumpet-like flower which is highly prized for uses in worship. The seeds which have a

narcotic effect; are found in a thorny capsule. The leaf, lubricated with warm rape-seed oil, is applied to a diseased eye.

DAPHNE OLEODES

Kashmiri name	...	Gandalun
English name	...	Daphne
Family ...	...	Thymelaceae
Locality ...	...	Shankaráchár

Uses.—It is a shrub bearing creamy white flowers. The leaves are used for some neural diseases and nausea.

CAUCALIS LEPTOPHYLLA

Kashmiri name	...	Mohora Kach
English name	...	
Family ...	...	Umbelliferae
Locality ...	...	Waste lands

Uses.—It has white flowers. The seeds are used as medicine.

ACHILLIA MILLIFOLLIUM

Kashmiri name	...	Phal gasa
English name	...	Milfoil
Family ...	...	Umbelliferae
Locality ...	...	Round fields

Uses.—It has white flowers. The leaves are used in preparing medicine for stomach affections and the root for toothache.

FENICULUM VALGARE

Kashmiri name	...	Phaka zur
English name	...	Fennel
Family ...	...	Umbelliferae
Locality ...	...	In fields (rare).

Uses.—It is a beautiful plant. In some European countries it is used as a spice. 'As much as eight and a half

pounds of fennel was brought for King Edward I's household for one month's supply.'

RUMEX

Kashmiri name	...	Oböj
English name	...	Dock
Family ...	...	Polygonaceae
Locality ...	...	In fields and gardens

Uses.—It is a potherb. It has a little sour taste. It is cooked with or without fishes. The root pounded and mixed with oil or ghee is used for boils.

RUBUS NIVEUS

Kashmiri name	...	Chanch
English name	...	Raspberry
Family ...	...	Rosaceae
Locality ...	...	Shankaráchár, Zobwan

Uses.—It is a shrub. The fruit is edible. It is good for blood.

ALTNEA OFFICENALIS

Kashmiri name	...	Saza posh
English name	...	Holly hock
Family ...	...	Malvaceae
Locality ...	...	Gardens

Uses.—The flower, along with the wheat bran, is used in washing the feet of a sick person. The seeds form the chief ingredient in decoction of sherbat. The root has a lubricating effect used for anima.

URTICA DIOICA

Kashmiri name	...	Soai
English name	...	Stinging nettle
Family ...	...	Urticeae
Locality ...	...	Waste lands

Uses.—The leaves are pounded and applied to wounds. The root boiled in tea and sugar is believed to cure malaria. In old schools (maktabs) this plant was thrashed on the naked boys as a punishment for bad behaviour.

AMARANTHUS FRUMENTACUS

Kashmiri name	...	Ganhár, lisa
English name	...	
Family ...	...	
Locality ...	...	Fields, also cultivated

Uses.—The seeds are eaten mixed with sugar. The ashes of this plant are used as saz, in soap preparation.

ANALYSIS OF THE PLANT

Moisture ...	...	19·43 %
Ash ...	...	3·19
Protain ...	...	11·50
Carbohydrates	...	66·62
Fat ...	...	4·45
Fibre ...	...	2·1

Dr. JOACHIM

OXALIS CORNICULUTA

Kashmiri name	...	Sebargi
English name	...	Sorrel
Family ...	...	Geraminaceae
Locality ...	...	Fields

Uses.—It has a yellow flower. The leaves are used in *chetni.* It is good for eye-sight. A medicine for eyes prepared from the juice of the plant.

GAGEA-KASHMIRIANA

Kashmiri name	...
English name	...

Family ...	...	Liliaceae
Locality ...	...	Malla khah

Uses.—It has a yellow flower like a star. It is one of the first flowers to bloom.

Acorus calamus

Kashmiri name	...	Vai
English name	...	Sweet flag
Family ...	...	Araideae
Locality ...	...	In swampy places outside Srinagar

Uses.—It is used on New Year's day. It is good for memory. Jam is prepared from it.

Solanum nigrum, Dulcamara?

Kashmiri name	...	Kambai
English name	...	
Family ...	...	Solanaceae
Locality ...	...	In waste lands

Uses.—It has a white flower. The seeds are used in decoctions. The juice of the plant mixed with butter is applied to a swollen limb.

Capsella bursa-pastoris

Kashmiri name	...	Kralamonḍ
English name	...	Shepherd's purse
Family ...	...	Cruciferae
Locality ...	...	In all places

Uses.—It has a white flower. The plant is eaten raw.

Verbascum thapsus

Kashmiri name	...	Bolar kon
English name	...	Mullein
Family ...	...	Scrophularineae
Locality ...	...	In waste lands

Uses.—It has a light yellow flower. The leaves mixed with oil or butter are used for itches.

CHENOPODIUM BLITUM

Kashmiri name	...	Wan pálak
English name	...	Goose foot
Family ...	...	Chenopodiaceae
Locality ...	...	Shankaráchár

Uses.—The fruit and leaves are eaten.

BERBEBIS LYCIUM

Kashmiri name	...	Kava dach
English name	...	
Family ...	...	Berberideae
Locality ...	...	Shankaráchár, Zebwan

Uses.—It is a shrub. The fruit is eaten and is a blood purifier. The root is used in preparing medicine for eyes. It is said to be a remedy for cholera.

FUMARIA PAVIFLORA

Kashmiri name	...	Sháhtar
English name	...	
Family ...	...	Fumariacea
Locality ...	...	In fields

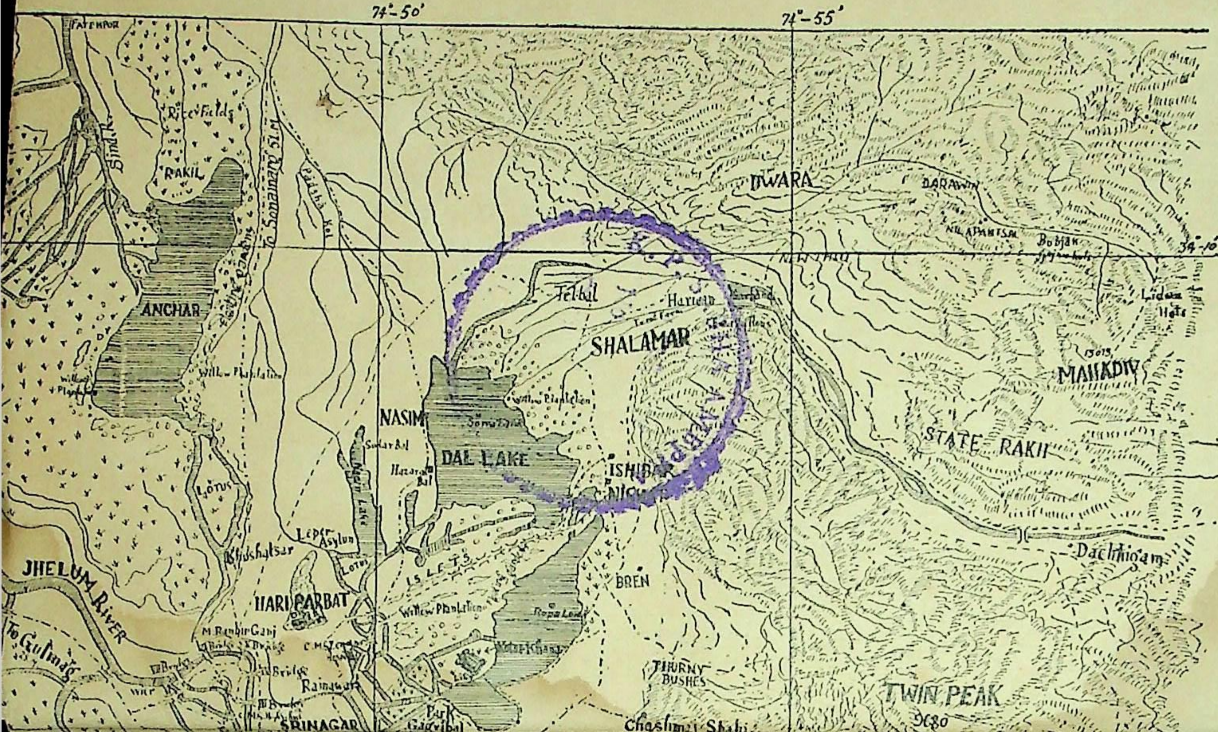
Uses.—The juice of the plant is taken internally along with whey to give a cooling effect.

DIOSCOREA DELTOIDEA

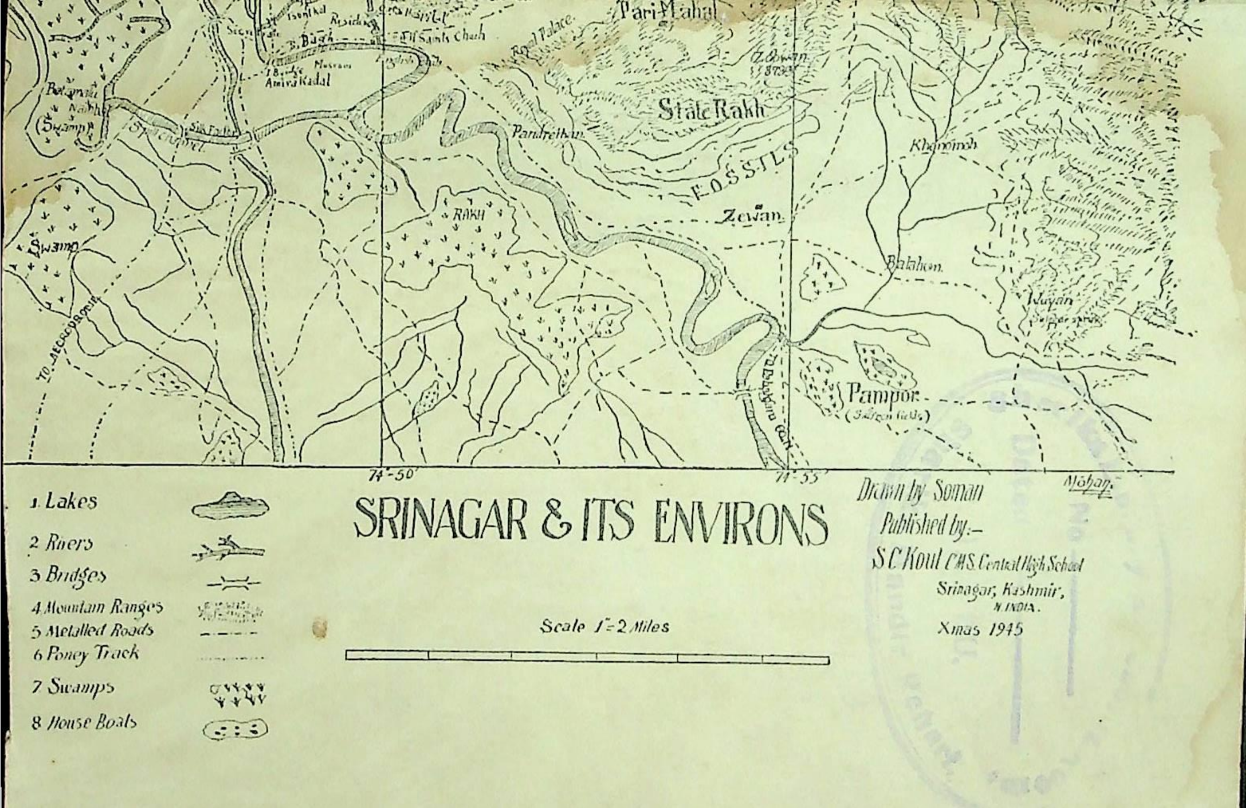
Kashmiri name	...	Krats
English name	...	
Family ...	...	
Locality ...	...	In fields

Uses.—In spring the leaves are eaten as a vegetable and are supposed good for eye-sight.

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Mohan
Published by:-
S C Koul CMS Central High School
Srinagar, Kashmir,
N. INDIA.
Xmas 1945